

# WORKERS' TRUTH

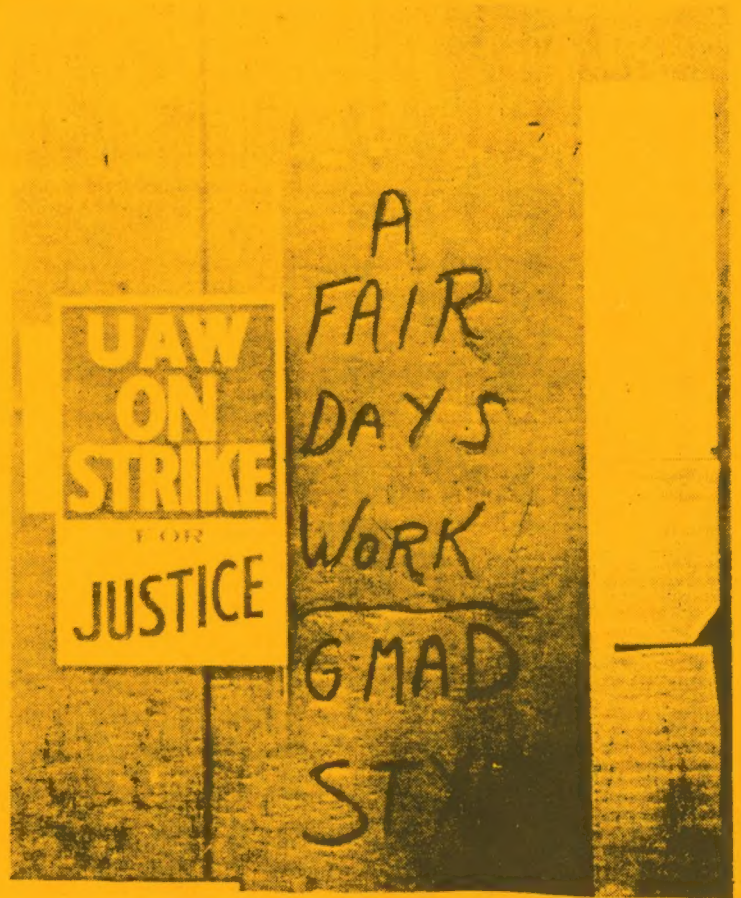
Dedicated to the  
Construction of the  
International Party of  
Revolutionary Workers  
(Fifth International)

Vol.1, No.1

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**Revolutionary  
Marxist  
Answer to:  
Which  
Way for  
the  
Trade  
Unions?**



***Indochina Women's Day  
Manifesto Open Letter to all  
Internationalism Trotskyists***

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# What is "Workers' Truth"?

*Workers' Truth* is a revolutionary Marxist monthly. It is the public voice of the Revolutionary Workers Group and is dedicated to the construction of the International Party of Revolutionary Workers (Fifth International).

The name *Workers' Truth* comes from the name of the Russian newspaper *Rabocheye Pravda* (*Workers' Truth*) which was published by revolutionary Marxists who struggled against the restoration of capitalism in Russia by the Bolsheviks through their "New Economic Policy." These Comrades were hunted down by the secret state police and executed or exiled to slave labor camps in Siberia. Our *Workers' Truth* represents the revival of the struggle of these revolutionary martyrs.

In 1917 the Russian workers came to power under the leadership of the revolutionary Bolshevik Party led by Lenin and Trotsky. The old ruling classes and their imperialist backers mounted a counter-revolutionary war in an attempt to regain power. The Russian workers bravely fought off this attempted counter-revolution. However, their victory left them exhausted and was thus shortlived. The Russian workers' state was isolated due to the fact that no corresponding successful revolution occurred in advanced capitalist Western Europe. The Bolshevik leaders became demoralized and disheartened at this turn of events and refused to wage a struggle against the black marketeers and peasant capitalists who were daily growing stronger. Instead against the protests of the revolutionary Workers Opposition within the Bolshevik Party the defended these capitalists against the interests of the proletariat. This was the real meaning of the "New Economic Policy." The Workers Opposition was smashed, but the Comrades around *Workers' Truth* rose up to take its place. It is to carry on the revolutionary traditions of the pre-1921 Bolshevik Party and Communist (Third) International, the Workers Op-

position, and *Workers' Truth* along with the revolutionary writings of Marx and Engels, most prominent of which is *The Communist Manifesto*, that the Revolutionary Workers Group and *Workers' Truth* have come into existence.

We originated as the Revolutionary Workers Faction of the Class Struggle League which is a centrist Trotskyist organization. At first we thought that it would be possible to win the Class Struggle League to our revolutionary Marxist program. It did not take very long, however, for us to realize that this would not be the case. We therefore found it necessary to leave the Class Struggle League in order to wage a revolutionary struggle to win over class conscious militants in the working class movement.

In the pages of *Workers' Truth* we will give a Marxist analysis of the important questions facing the international working class today. We will discuss the problems facing the trade unions and our solutions to those problems. We will reprint for the benefit of our readers documents and speeches from the past struggles of the revolutionary Marxist movement. Our press while it is directed toward the advanced layers of the working class and not simply to conscious socialists will not dwell on low level economic issues. We will bring revolutionary Marxist politics into the working class, for without revolutionary Marxism, the working class is doomed to defeat at the hands of the capitalists.

Most importantly *Workers' Truth* will be the cornerstone for building the American section of the International Party of Revolutionary Workers (Fifth International).

READ *WORKERS' TRUTH*!

JOIN THE REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS GROUP!  
BUILD THE INTERNATIONAL PARTY OF REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS (FIFTH INTERNATIONAL)  
FOR THE WORLD SOCIALIST REVOLUTION!  
FORWARD TO THE WORLDWIDE WORKERS' REPUBLIC!



# March 1973 WORKERS' TRUTH

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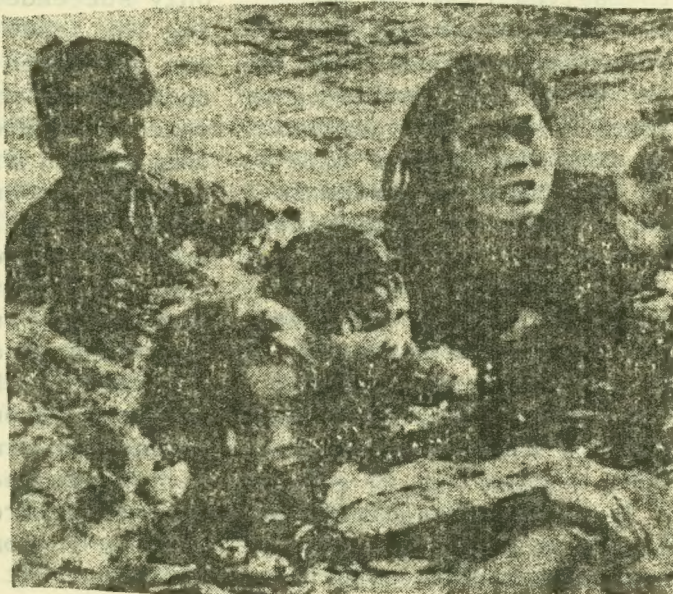


# The Indochina War, the Socialist Left and Our Program for Action

by Allan Crandall



*Neither Le Duc Tho, nor Henry Kissinger represent an answer for the Indochinese workers and peasants. Only the independent revolutionary struggle of the Indochinese toiling masses led by a revolutionary Marxist party can end their oppression. American workers must support this struggle in Indochina and no other.*



The Indochina War, recently declared dead (but still kicking) by all the capitalist governments involved, has been typical of other wars in the age of imperialism. In gallons of innocent blood spilled, acres of land decimated, and level of warfare technology, it has certainly equalled or surpassed other wars in this century. The savage bombing of North Vietnam has been one of the major at-

rocities of our time. The total human cost has been staggering. This is something which many people know.

The war has also caused its share of political confusion, especially on the socialist left. Since a foremost task of socialists is one of drawing class lines, especially in the case of imperialist war, all political tendencies in the U.S. claiming the name "social-

ist" in even a vague sense have attempted, in their propaganda on the war, to do just that.

The Communist Party, largest "left" grouping has simply followed every twist and turn of Soviet foreign policy like the loyal lap-dog that it is.

The Socialist Workers Party, the largest group on the U.S. left except for the servants of the Soviet Union, the Communist Party, deserves to



(but can not) be ignored, for they have never even attempted to draw a class line in their propaganda on the war. Their role instead has been one of wielding a large rubber eraser, attempting to erase class lines all the way back to the beginning of the war and their first activities in the anti-war movement. They have continually played the role of building "peace coalitions" in which they called on American workers to bloc with American capitalists in support of the North Vietnamese capitalists and more importantly "bringing our boys home."

The Workers League, so-called left critics of the SWP have differentiated themselves from the SWP on three points: 1) They have cheered louder for the Vietnamese Stalinists; 2) They have called on American workers to go on a general strike in support of the North Vietnamese capitalists and their agents in the South, the NLF-PRG; 3) They have called for the formation of a Labor Party led by the likes of George Meany, Leonard Woodcock and I.W. Abel.

Fourthly, the International Socialists' role has been equally as pernicious, if not more so. The IS sees North Vietnamese workers as oppressed by a "bureaucratic collectivist" class. Yet they call for the victory of the NLF-PRG knowing full well that this would extend "bureaucratic collectivism" (if such an animal existed) to South Vietnam. They try to get around this by saying that

they are for the "military" victory of the NLF and that before they can consolidate political victory the Vietnamese workers should seize power. Why wait for this NLF military victory? The Vietnamese workers should seize power now not tomorrow.

The history of the various centrist groupings on the U.S. left, the Spartacist League, Class Struggle League, *Vanguard Newsletter* and so on, has been a little better, but not much. Attempting, as they have attempted, to draw a class line, and attempting to clear up existing confusion in the minds of American workers as to the causes of imperialist war, they have only succeeded in muddying the issue for everyone concerned. This is because their programs, which resemble each other completely, are based on a common ground, a common confusion called Trotskyism. We will examine some common elements of this thoroughly bankrupt program in some detail:

1. All of the above-mentioned groups have called for a military victory to the National Liberation Front. The wording in some cases is different but the intent is the same.

2. All of these groups have called for sympathetic strikes on the part of American workers to stop the flow of American materials to South Vietnam.

3. All of these groups have, at one time or another, mentioned, in passing, and in hushed tones, their wish for

some amorphous type of "political revolution" to overthrow the leadership and change the program of the North Vietnamese state capitalist state, the DRVN (which they see as a deformed workers' state).

4. Lastly they have all called upon the larger state capitalist countries, the USSR and the Peoples Republic of China, to come to the aid of the NLF and the DRVN with planes, guns, bombs and all the other materials necessary for the efficient prosecution of a war in the twentieth century.

The Revolutionary Workers Group recognizes the existence of some logical consistency to this program. But we are also aware of the fact that it is most emphatically *not* in the best interests of the Vietnamese working class, the American working class or the working class as a whole. This program is in fact typical of the centrist character of all the above-mentioned Trotskyist groups, which seem incapable, in many situations of advancing or even advocating the independent stand of the proletariat. The truth of the matter is this: the Trotskyist groups, far from being anti-Stalinist and pro-working class in their program on the war, instead cross class lines, choosing to aid and abet the further exploitation of Vietnamese workers and peasants at the hands of local Vietnamese capitalists! We will explain further with a point-by-point analysis of this strange program which is purportedly in the best



interests of the working class.

### 1. Victory to the NLF

Some of the Trotskyist groups phrase this slogan "Victory to the Vietnamese Workers and Peasants". We would point out that the Revolutionary Workers Group also supports the victory of the Vietnamese workers and peasants. Our difference with Trotskyism is that our program will eventually work, theirs is a program for further defeat. The Class Struggle League, one of the newer scraps in the Trotskyist rag-bag, calls, at least formally, for the victory of the NLF on the grounds that the NLF is the organ which the Vietnamese workers and peasants have chosen to resist American imperialism, so its final victory must be called for by revolutionaries. Let us demolish this reasoning and this slogan with a Marxist analysis of the NLF and its political organization the Provisional Revolutionary Government.

Some Trotskyists will agree to the following fact, and yet will still insist upon calling for the victory of the NLF: the workers of South Vietnam do not control the NLF, either through election of officers, worker-soldier committees on a unit-wide basis, or on a higher level through workers' councils (soviets). Some or most Trotskyists will also agree to the fact that the NLF is the military arm of the Provisional Revolutionary Government, which is nothing more nor less than the direct political arm

of that section of the S. Vietnamese ruling class which in collaboration with the N. Vietnamese capitalist class wishes to drive the American capitalists out of Indochina in order to better exploit workers themselves; that in fact, both the South Vietnamese workers and peasants and the North Vietnamese workers and peasants are fighting, not because of progressive class sentiments, but because of reactionary nationalist sentiments. *Why then do Trotskyists persist in their madness?*

Some do so out of a simple undisguised admiration for the politics and program of the PRG, in spite of the fact that, among other things, it holds the fundamentally anti-working class position that the right to private property in the means of production shall remain inviolable in South Vietnam. Others, those who are better grounded in the theoretical precepts of Trotskyism, do so because of the traditional Trotskyist call in the case of imperialist attack on backward countries for military blocs with the local capitalists. We feel that this position, in itself, lies to the workers by saying that the local bosses are somehow more preferable than the bosses from across the water. But actually, to be truly orthodox, our modern-day Trotskyists have no business applying this position to this case, unless they can show us independent workers' militias in South Vietnam today, which are in a bloc with the NLF. This

they can not do.

We would also mention the fact that even the PRG does not call for the military victory of the NLF! In fact, the PRG has presently achieved its main goal--bourgeois political legitimacy in South Vietnamese elections! Either the PRG is blessed with qualities which can only be seen through rose-colored Trotskyist glasses, or we have another case of the Trotskyists tripping over a bulldozer and calling it a banana peel.

On another level, Trotskyists call for victory to the NLF because of their historical isolation from workers and from the working class, which allows them to believe that, in the final analysis, all the above facts are unimportant. But this is par for the course. Regardless of what Trotskyists say, Trotskyism has survived this long as a movement not in spite of its isolation from the working class, but because of it.

### 2. Sympathetic Strikes

The Revolutionary Workers Group realizes that sympathetic strikes by workers in one country can be an invaluable aid to the progress of a workers' revolution in another country. But no workers' revolution is presently occurring in South Vietnam, and we defy anyone to show us differently. It is a nationalist revolution and we feel that to call for mass strikes in the US for the purpose of allowing the Vietnamese capitalists to better exploit Vietnamese workers is a waste of the valuable energy of the American working class. A better use of a



mass strike by American workers would be one of seizing factories, establishing workers' councils and putting the resulting power to use in the building of a revolutionary International. This we would agree with. We also advocate mass strikes in times of crisis for the working class. For instance, in a case where major trade union leaders are arrested as part of a government attack on the working class or against the wage controls. But not, we repeat, as a tactic designed to aid the South Vietnamese bourgeois nationalist revolution.

### 3. Political Revolution in North Vietnam

Some Trotskyist groups and individuals, in moments of extreme militancy, will whisper this one about (mostly as a way of genuflecting to the old, half-hearted anti-Stalinist traditions of the Trotskyist movement. But they will never say what they mean. They will never advance concrete forms for their sentiments. This again is because they think that North Vietnam is just a fine little country, in spite of the fact that the workers are not in control, are lied to by their state capitalist bosses and are sent off to die in South Vietnam to further the interests of their state capitalist bosses.

It is a favorite Trotskyist line, when speaking of their disagreements with the North Vietnamese government, to say that the "Stalinist bureaucracy" in North Vietnam deliberately attempts to

hide class issues beneath democratic slogans. We say this is typical of capitalists anywhere. They are not attempting to hide class issues any more than others of their ilk. They are just run-of-the-mill, very ardent, bourgeois nationalists.

In reference to this slogan for political revolution the Revolutionary Workers Group has a concrete program for workers' socialist revolution in North and South Vietnam which will be contained in this article.

### 4. Aid from the USSR and Peoples Republic of China

This is only another example of the Trotskyist habit of calling for something which they know will not come about under the circumstances (Nixon's trips to Peking and Moscow) and which is not really desirable in the first place. They usually do this in the name of "education," that is, calling upon the fox to eat the chicken in order to demonstrate to the chicken the bankrupt condition of the fox. To the worker with his wits about him, this type of education will be extremely illuminating as to the bankrupt condition of Trotskyist political theory.

In reality, this slogan calls for the USSR and China, imperialist countries like the US, to give aid to the Vietnamese bourgeoisie in the further exploitation of Vietnamese workers and peasants. This slogan commits the unpardonable--it chooses sides in what is ultimately an inter-imperialist conflict, when it

should be on the side of the working class.

So there it is--the Trotskyist program for the Indochina War--an exercise in political confusion. If carried out it will mean only further defeat for the Indochinese working class. It does not further the independent stand of the proletariat one iota.

To explain it another way: In South Vietnam at the present time, there are no truly Marxist workers, but there are workers, some with trade union consciousness and some with subjectively revolutionary intentions, and they are imprisoned and executed. Their political literature is suppressed. Their trade unions are suppressed at every turn. They along with less advanced workers, are exploited mercilessly for surplus value.

When and if the PRG-NLF gains political power, it is true that because the state capitalist method of production is within narrow limits, a more efficient method of organizing capitalist production, the life conditions of the average Vietnamese may improve a little. But independent-minded workers with subjectively revolutionary intentions or even trade union consciousness will still be imprisoned and executed. Their literature will be suppressed. And workers will still be exploited for the profit of the "Stalinist bureaucracy," the ruling bourgeois class.

Symptomatic of the political degeneracy of the American left is the fact that, now that the

*Continued on page 32*



# International Working Women's Day

by Elaine Bryce

The pages of history show that March 8th has been an International Working Women's Day--a day of struggle. In 1857 women workers in the garment industry fought for better working conditions and a ten-hour day. In 1908 on March 8 women workers in New York commemorated the 1857 fight with a demonstration demanding the vote and better working conditions. Two years later March 8 was established as International Women's Day at the Second International Conference of Women Socialists held in Copenhagen in 1910. The aim of the proposal introduced by Clara Zetkin was to mobilize women in the campaign for the extension of suffrage rights to women. Since its institution in 1910 the

activities held have taken many forms. International Women's Day was first observed in 1911 in Germany, Austria, Denmark and Switzerland where special meetings and demonstrations were organized. In the words of a prominent leader of the Russian Revolution, Alexandra Kollontai:

Germany and Austria... were one seething trembling sea of women. Meetings were organized everywhere--in the small towns and even in the villages. Halls were packed so full that they had to ask workers to give up their places to the women. This was certainly the first show of militancy by the working women. Men stayed at home with the children for a change, and

their wives, the captive housewives, went to meetings.

It was first observed in Russia in 1913 by women textile workers in Petrograd and later in 1914 the activities were extended to other cities. Of course, in these early years under the repression of Tsarist rule the activities were illegal, but the observance of International Women's Day became an annual event. Again, in 1917, the women textile workers demonstrated in the streets of Petrograd on March 8 (February 23 by the old calendar in use in Russia at the time) which triggered the historic Russian Revolution of February 1917. Leon Trotsky, a Bolshevik leader, describes the events of the





day in the following:

The 23rd of February was International Woman's Day. The social-democratic circles had intended to mark this day in a general manner by meetings, speeches, leaflets....the women textile workers in several factories went on strike, and sent delegates to the metal workers with an appeal for support....The overgrown breadlines had provided the last stimulus. About 90,000 workers, men and women, were on strike that day. The fighting mood expressed itself in demonstrations, meetings, encounters with the police. The movement began in the Vyborg district and then crossed over to the Petersburg side....Woman's Day passed successfully with enthusiasm and without victims. But what it concealed in itself, no one had guessed even by nightfall.

Trotsky goes on to describe how the movement grew in the following days to include most of the industrial workers of Petrograd, students, and other groups. To the women's initial demand for "bread" were added the slogans: "Down with autocracy!" "Down with the war!" The Tsar rallied his most reliable forces, the Cossacks to disperse the masses of demonstrators but the workers had talked with the Cossacks and the Cossacks had promised not to shoot. Discipline was breaking down among the Tsar's troops as they began hesitatingly to align themselves

with the revolutionary workers. The relationship between the workers and soldiers was of crucial importance. To win over the police was an impossibility; winning over the soldiers was essential. Trotsky points out the militant role the women workers played in the effort to win over the soldier ranks:

They go up to the cordons more boldly than men, take hold of the rifles, beseech, almost command: "Put down your bayonets-join us." The soldiers are excited, ashamed, exchange anxious glances, waver; someone makes up his mind first, and the bayonets rise guiltily above the shoulders of the advancing crowd.

After a few initial successes, the uprising spread. The workers were counting on a victory and so became bolder, more aggressive. But the Tsarist government was escalating its tactics, also. More troops were brought into the city. More arrests were made, including five members of the Petrograd Committee of the Bolsheviks. On the fourth day the struggle was raised to a decisive level. The soldiers were strictly ordered to shoot and some obeyed. Forty were counted dead; more wounded.

At this stage, the critical element was the soldier. The workers concentrated all their energies on agitating the soldiers into action against their officers and the government. The workers appealed "Come with us!--Don't shoot

your brothers and sisters!" While the Tsar threatened to send anyone to the front who did not shoot the "enemy." The soldiers were won over to the revolution but not simply by appeals. It was the unflinching determination of the workers which convinced the soldiers that this was a struggle to the death, not a mere demonstration after which they would report back to the barracks and face their officers. They realized that the people intended to have victory at any cost. They had to join to make certain that victory. On the fifth day, one regiment after another mutinied before they could be led into the streets. The soldiers united with the revolutionary workers and thus assured the victory. There were a few skirmishes, but by and large, the battle was won with the winning of the soldiers. The triumphant revolution of the workers and soldiers in Petrograd spread throughout the country. The Tsar and Tsarina were deposed but the newly-won power did not yet rest in the hands of the working class, the proletariat. In the first days of victory, the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies was formed --a council of representatives from the factories and barracks--which became the center of authority. However, the leaders of the Soviet (the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries), faint-hearted so-called socialists would feel secure only if they could find a new "boss" so they handed over power to a committee of bourgeois liberals, the



Provisional Government. For several months, the Executive Committee of the Soviet and the Provisional Government existed side-by-side in an unstable system of dual power. On the eve of October when the revolutionary Bolsheviks gained a majority in the Soviets the stage was set for the seizure of power by the working class. This was achieved with the Bolshevik-led insurrection of October (November by today's calendar). With the seizure of power by the workers, women for the first time achieved substantive equality. However, this did not last for long. The revolution remained isolated and the Bolsheviks weakened until in 1921 they (like the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries in 1917) went looking for a new "boss" and restored capitalism in Russia.

\* \* \* \* \*

International Women's Day, with the rise of a new interest in feminism on the part of many women, has not seen the militancy of the women workers of Petrograd in 1917. Today's feminists, as one might expect, are "celebrating" International Women's Day with diversions like sidewalk fairs and festivals. Although these activities, to be sure, are enjoyable and interesting, they are diversions from the real struggle that women are a part of. That is the class struggle. Women suffer a special oppression in today's society. In many cases, they are not paid equally for doing the same work as men.

They are forced to spend needless time with the drudgery of housework. And they face the same bosses in the factories as all workers, only at the most menial and low-paying jobs. However, the root of the *special* oppression of women is the same as the root of the oppression of all working people, that is, capitalism. The capitalist rulers know that it is in their interests to keep women "in their place." That is why women are in that place and they will continue to stay there as long as the capitalists rule. We can not speak of the liberation of women without speaking also of a worldwide socialist revolution and the building of a socialist society. Of course, some noted feminists like Bella Abzug and Shirley Chisholm will find their liberation through posts in the Democratic Party, a few others may be able to make their separate peace in communes, collectives or feminist consciousness raising groups and a very few (like Jackie Kennedy Onassis) in bourgeois circles have no need of either for they suffer no exploitation or oppression. But then we're not talking about the liberation of women but the liberation of *some* women. No, *all* women are not "sisters." The all important division between bourgeoisie and proletariat which the feminists do not talk about in their struggles for "equality." As Lenin said, "There is no 'equality', nor can there be, of oppressed and oppressor, of exploited and exploiter." The masses of working women will spend

March 8th slaving in factories making profits for others--men and women alike. The only answer for these women is the struggle for socialism in unity with their class brothers.

A very clear distinction must be made between the feminist ideology and revolutionary Marxist ideology. Both claim to be for the liberation of women. But where revolutionaries fight for the unity of the working class for the overthrow of capitalism and the construction of a classless society without oppression, feminism works against that unity.

The ruling class, the bourgeoisie, can certainly tolerate women getting together and trying to end their oppression by themselves without attacking capitalism. In fact, they appreciate the feminist ideology because it preaches that women must fight isolated from and *against* men. There is nothing more terrifying to the international bourgeoisie than international working class solidarity. Any ideology which keeps workers separated from each other: men from women; Black from white; operates in the interests of the bourgeoisie. Proletarian women have no use for feminism.

#### *Revolutionary Program For The Liberation Of Women*

The complete and actual emancipation of women will be accomplished with the destruction of the pillars of capitalist society. That is, with the abolition of private ownership of the land and factories and the establishment of a workers' republic. Only in a socialist society

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# Origins of the Revolutionary Workers Group



*"The liberation of the workers can only be the deed of the working class itself."*

*-Karl Marx*

by David Ross  
& Elaine Bryce

The Revolutionary Workers Group has its origins in the Trotskyist movement. We were first formed as the Revolutionary Workers Faction of the Class Struggle League a Trotskyist split-off from the petty bourgeois Socialist Workers Party. The Class Struggle League which fought against the bourgeois program of the Socialist Workers Party as the Leninist Faction left the SWP in October, 1972. The LF/CSL had held a convention in August at which it elaborated its program. The program outlined at that convention was the most left of all the Trotskyist organizations in the United States. The Comrades who went on to form the Revolutionary Workers Faction were among the strongest supporters of this program at that time. This is because we had nothing to compare it to save the various other centrist and reformist programs around the Amer-

ican Left.

Shortly after the August convention two Comrades began to develop differences with the LF/CSL line. This was a result of the great interest in theoretical and practical questions aroused by the fight in the SWP. Comrade Jon Sprague in Madison wrote a letter to the Central Committee of the LF/CSL on the question of trade union work. The LF/CSL had adopted the position that independent trade union caucuses should be built on the Trotskyist Transitional Program. Comrade Sprague wrote that to be consistent, not only should the party caucuses be based on the transitional program but that they should be party caucuses, controlled by the Party and open only to Party members. He also wanted to make it clear that the program for the trade unions was not a sub-program, but the

Party's *entire* program.

The Central Committee promised to answer this letter which was written in August 1972. At the time of our departure from the CSL everyone was still waiting for the answer (Marc 1973).

At the same time that Comrade Sprague was rethinking the trade union question, Comrade Ross in Chicago began to take another look at the Russian Question. The SWP had always frowned upon studying the history of the movement with a critical eye. It was always, "Here were the good guys and there were the bad guys." Upon studying SWP Internal Bulletins from the 1939-40 faction fight, Comrade Ross came to the conclusion that it was the Shachtman minority who had been right and not the Cannon-Trotsky majority. Comrade Ross then wrote a letter to the Central Committee advising them of the fact that he was opposed to the uncondi-



tional defense of the Soviet Union although he still felt that it was a degenerated workers' state and that he was preparing a document on the question. Both the Comrades in Madison and Chicago then took up a study and discussion of the nature of the Soviet Union and its defense. The Comrades first came to the conclusion that the Soviet Union was a bureaucratic collectivist state and that it should only be defended against imperialist attack. Comrade Sprague then concluded that the Soviet Union should be defended unconditionally no matter who attacked whom, because bureaucratic collectivism was progressive vis a vis capitalism. This resulted in the dissolving of the tendency which had begun to crystalize around the questions. Comrades Sprague, Diane Baldwin and Elaine Bryce standing for defensism and Comrade Ross for defeatism.

After further discussions and study all four Comrades came to the conclusion that the Soviet Union was not bureaucratic collectivist but state capitalist. However, Comrades Sprague and Baldwin still maintained that it should be defended in a war with the United States because it was "conjuncturally progressive."

Finally all the Comrades were won to the position that the state capitalist Soviet Union should not be defended. The Comrades then informed the Central Committee of their intention to form a tendency. A brief flurry of cor-

respondence ensued and the Comrades responding to pressure from the CC decided not to form a tendency but to wait to see how the discussion went. Comrade Ross was the only Comrade to oppose this move on the two grounds that the issues were serious enough and that the grouping was functioning as a tendency anyway. The grouping now had differences not only on the Russian Question and the trade union question (to which Comrade Ross had been won from the centrist position of calling for caucuses independent of the party and based on a sub-trade union program), but also on the call for a Labor Party and on the national question.

Shortly after the decision not to form a tendency the grouping drafted the statement *From Trotskyism to Marxism*. This document was considered by the grouping to be a basic statement of their differences with Trotskyism historically. At the same time that these Comrades were moving away from Trotskyism the Class Struggle League leadership was moving in a rightward direction. After the August Convention the CSL had had a perspective of fusion with the Spartacist League, an orthodox left Trotskyist grouping. However, as the CSL leadership moved away from orthodox Trotskyism, they moved away from the Spartacist League and toward the *Vanguard Newsletter*, a Trotskyist grouping whose major programmatic difference with the Spartacist League is

its unbridled trade union opportunism. Four Comrades in the CSL then split from the CSL to join the Spartacist League. In their resignation statement they cogently pointed out that the development of the state capitalist grouping within the CSL would push the CSL closer and closer to the *Vanguard Newsletter*.

This prediction came true sooner than anyone expected. The Class Struggle League and the *Vanguard Newsletter* passed out a joint leaflet to the Spartacist League Convention held in November 1972. In this leaflet the CSL leadership totally embraced the *Vanguard Newsletter's* trade union opportunism and called the Spartacist League trade union position which was the CSL's paper position) sectarian ultimatism. Comrades Sprague, Baldwin, Ross and Bryce then wrote an article denouncing the rightward motion evidenced in the leaflet. Not only had the leaflet denounced the CSL's trade union politics as sectarian ultimatism, but it announced to the Spartacist League and all those attending the convention that the Class Struggle League and *Vanguard Newsletter* were in the process of fusing. This announcement was made before it had been announced to the ranks of the Class Struggle League itself (not to mention the National Committee of which both Comrades Sprague and Ross were members).

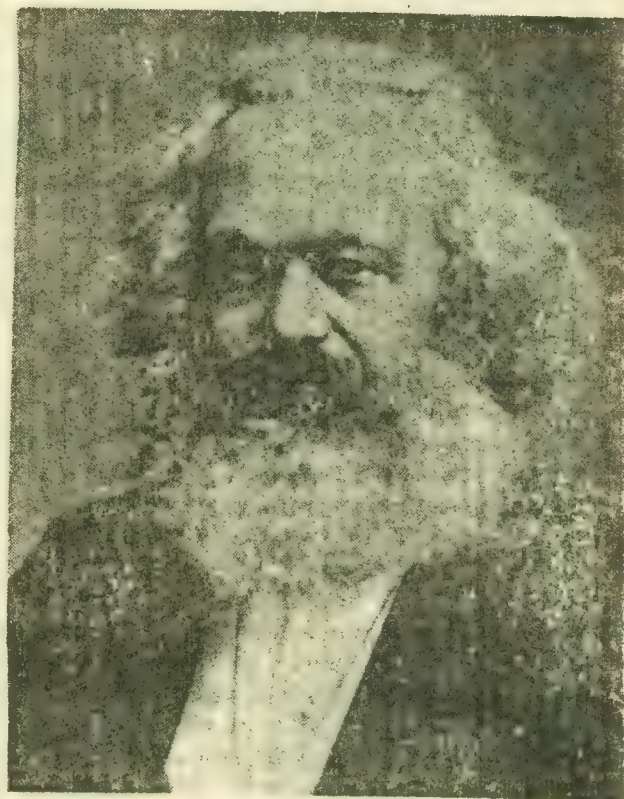
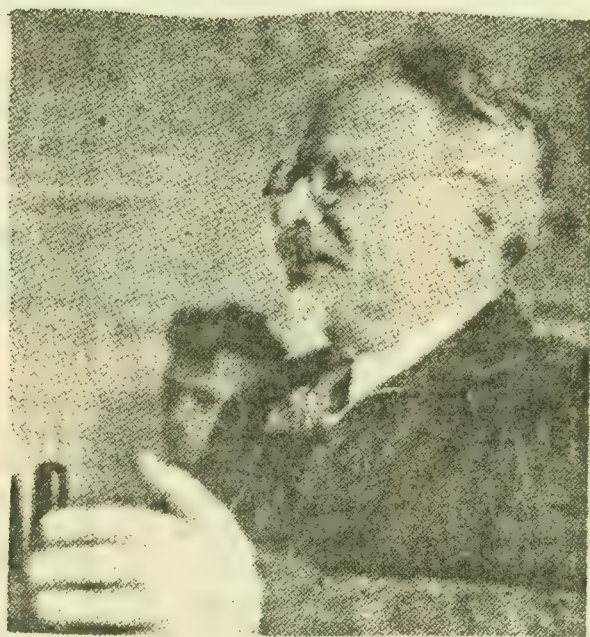
Shortly after the writing of this statement, the Comrades who held the state capitalist position came to the conclusion that it had

*Continued on page 32*



# From Trotskyism to Marxism

Open Letter from the  
Revolutionary Workers Group  
to all Trotskyists



1. In October, 1917 the proletariat in Russia conquered power under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party.

2. The proletariat remained in power for the four year period from 1917 to 1921. The close of the "civil war" in 1921 did not mark the victory of the working class but instead marked the mutual devastation of both the industrial bourgeoisie and the industrial proletariat.

3. By 1921 the basic social power fell into the hands of peasant capitalists, black marketeers and the proprietors of light industry. Small-scale capitalist relations sprung up like weeds on the back of the deep-going social crisis.

4. The New Economic Policy was the legalization of the restoration of private capitalist production. While the Bolsheviks described the NEP as a tactical retreat dictated by events, it actually represented a principled retreat, a programmatic crossing of class

lines. If events dictated the restoration of capitalist property, which they partially did in the form of the black market and peasant capitalism, then the task of revolutionaries was to begin organizing the workers exploited by those relations to overthrow them. The Bolsheviks, under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky, chose instead to remain in power by administering capitalism.

5. The workers' state itself underwent a qualitative transformation in 1921: it became an instrument for defending bourgeois relations. That is, it became a bourgeois state.

6. The underlying reasoning of Trotsky (one of the earliest advocates of the NEP) rested on the theory that the Bolsheviks could maintain the dictatorship of the class even without the popular rule of the workers. They would guard the "conquests of October" despite the sinking of the proletariat itself into a political coma. Thus factions were banned in the party (1921) and the slogan



of workers' soviets was put on the shelf until some later date when the workers would once again prove worthy of workers democracy.

7. But the notion of a revolutionary party rising above its class is an optical illusion. In reality the Bolsheviks became an instrument in the service of the enemy class. That is, a workers' party administering a capitalist state.

8. Trotsky promised the workers that the harsh undemocratic regime of the Bolsheviks was only a temporary measure. But as always, the program proved more powerful than the intentions of its authors. From the time of the NEP onward, Trotsky became an inveterate centrist.

9. We maintain, as did Marx and Engels, that the very heart of the dictatorship of the proletariat is the popular rule of the workers for the purpose of suppressing the bourgeoisie. Inseparable, also, from the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat is the presence of workers' democratic control of the process of production. It may not always be possible, but it is always what we are for. Neither suppressing workers' democracy, nor defending capitalism are "tactical" questions for revolutionary Marxists.

10. Alongside the restoration of private capitalist production, the Bolsheviks also set up giant financial trusts which controlled the flow of capital in the nascent state sector of the economy. These administrators, though still devoid of political power in 1921, were the embryo of the state bourgeoisie.

11. The Bolsheviks appointed this section of the bourgeoisie. Of course, the Party still appeared to be the real power in society since the Nepmen, the kulaks and the state administrators all seemed to be dependent on the goodwill of these commanders of the Red Army, *i.e.*, the government party. But the program of this party inexorably subordinated it to the capitalists and not the other way around. As Marxists we hold that political power is always subordinate to social power.

12. The Bolsheviks had not risen above society as the sole commanding stratum (as Deutscher maintains), as if one could hold the proletarian dictatorship

in trust for the proletariat. In the period of 1921-1924 the Party paved the road to exile, prison and labor camps at the hands of the bourgeoisie, where most of the old cadre were to end up.

13. In the period of 1921-1928, with the gradual recovery of large-scale commodity production in the state sector, the large trusts which oversaw the accumulation of capital in this sector violently gained the political power in the CPSU that they needed to match the social power that had been handed to them on a silver platter back in 1921. The civil war in 1928 was a political revolution which marked the transformation of Russian economy from private capitalism to state capitalism.

14. In 1922, the *Workers Truth* group in the Soviet Union wrote that the main outcome and achievement remaining from the October Revolution was that it had "opened up broad perspectives for the rapid transformation of Russia into an advanced capitalist country." We agree one hundred percent with this statement. In fact, not only has Russia progressed to advanced capitalist status, but by the end of the Second Imperialist World War, it stood alongside the United States as the world's two top imperialist powers. This, in fact, was the essence of the "Cold War." It was not a diplomatic struggle between two class camps, as the Stalinists (and the Trotskyists) would have it, but the moves and counter-moves of two imperialist powers and their respective spheres of influence.

15. China, Cuba, Yugoslavia, North Vietnam, North Korea and the "Buffer States" are all state capitalist. There was never a dictatorship of the proletariat in these countries, and thus they were never workers' states (deformed or otherwise).

16. One of the major events after the war which accelerated the decomposition of (centrist) Trotskyism into (reformist) Pabloism was the winning of state power by the Chinese Communist Party. How could a reformist Stalinist party successfully create a workers' state? Pablo's response to this (artificial) dilemma was to negate the historical necessity for the vanguard party. In fact, the Chinese question is falsely posed by orthodox Trotskyism on two counts. First of all, the CCP did not



create a workers' state because the "new" state continued to defend bourgeois property rights. Secondly, the CCP unlike the mass Stalinist parties in Europe was a petty bourgeois party. It had its base not in the working class but in the peasantry and the urban intelligentsia. Not only were its immediate perspectives bourgeois, but its ultimate goals were based on the "bloc of four classes" coming to power and not the workers. Thus, its *total program* did not go beyond radical bourgeois conceptions. Once it had political power in its hands, however, it expropriated the old bourgeoisie and (for the bureaucrats) fulfilled the lifelong dream of the petty bourgeois: it transformed itself into a new bourgeoisie based on state capitalist property forms. Similarly, all the Stalinist parties which based themselves on the peasantry (Vietnam, Korea, Yugoslavia, etc.) were petty bourgeois parties.

17. The ideology of the state capitalist class is to equate state property with socialism, thereby denying the existence of a working class. The corollary of this is, of course, to deny the validity of independent working class organizations.

18. The essential theoretical preparation for the revolution in Russia, China, etc. today is to break down this equation to the workers and to develop the class consciousness of the proletariat.

19. This task can not be accomplished by Trotskyism. The working class in capitalist countries exists as a class-in-itself, as a class exploited by capital. It consists of those who produce surplus value for the bourgeoisie.

20. When the working class abolishes capital it abolishes itself as a class-in-itself. The working class does not have an independent existence outside of the independent existence of capital. When it seizes power it abolishes itself as a class. As Engels writes:

The proletariat takes political power and turns the means of production in the first instance into state property. But in doing this it abolishes itself as proletariat, abolishes all class distinctions and class antagonisms, and abolishes also the state as state. (*Anti-Duhring*, p. 301)

21. Does the proletariat exist in the dictatorship of the proletariat? Yes, but only in the sense of a class-for-itself, only in so far as it continues to struggle against the world bourgeoisie. Its existence becomes a subjective question. Thus, class-in-itself and class-for-itself, except in periods of impending civil war, are mutually exclusive states.

22. If the proletariat in Russia has indeed eradicated capitalism, and is no longer class conscious (as both Trotskyists and Stalinists maintain), then the Stalinists are more consistent in maintaining that there are no classes.

23. Trotskyism is a left split-off from Stalinism -- but without a solid theoretical basis. A confused leftward impulse can not make a revolution.

24. Only the theory of state capitalism offers a valid opposition to the theory of socialism in one country.

25. Trotsky's theory of degenerated workers' states represents a fundamental departure from historical materialism.

26. The second major revision of Marxism contained within the Trotskyist program is concerning the national question. There are in this case two fundamental errors: the theory of "permanent revolution" and more importantly a reversion to the two-stage theory of revolution in times of war.

27. The essence of "permanent revolution" is that the tasks of the bourgeois revolution can only be carried out through the victory of the proletariat under the leadership of the vanguard party. This is wrong on two counts. First: events subsequent to the Russian Revolution have proven that the socialist revolution was not necessary to carry out agrarian reform (expropriation of the landed aristocracy) and national independence in Yugoslavia, China, Korea, Vietnam, Cuba and the "Buffer States." Second: the task of the proletarian socialist revolution is not to achieve bourgeois democracy, but to supersede bourgeois democracy and institute proletarian democracy. In the epoch of imperialist decay the tasks of the bourgeois revolution *do not* become the tasks of the revolutionary proletariat, along with proletarian socialist tasks. The bourgeois national tasks are *superseded* by the proletarian socialist tasks.

28. In light of this it becomes clear



that revolutionaries do not call for Constituent Assemblies. A Constituent Assembly is in essence a bourgeois parliament. We counterpose to the call for a Constituent Assembly the call for workers' and peasants' councils. Likewise we do not call for "land to the peasants." This slogan, as Rosa Luxemburg pointed out in her critique of the Bolsheviks in the Russian Revolution is a call for capitalist agriculture. To this bourgeois-democratic demand we counterpose the proletarian socialist demand of "Expropriate the landlords under the control of the workers' and peasants' councils!" Along with this goes our opposition to the Fourth International's call for a republic in Italy and Greece after the Second Imperialist World War. We counterpose to this call the call for a workers' republic and the Socialist United States of Europe.

29. The second major revision on the national question concerns military support to the "national" bourgeoisie against imperialism, and along with this military support to popular fronts against Fascism. The working class must be broken from the bourgeoisie. This is the task of revolutionaries. It is our job to point out that the workers will be no better off if they are merely exploited by their "own" bourgeoisie than they are under imperialist exploitation. All wars are periods of great flux and crisis. We must intervene with the slogan of independent workers' militias and the struggle against both bourgeoisies. An excellent example is that of the SWP Minority (1939-40) on the Finnish events of 1939: no support to either the Finnish bourgeoisie or the invading Soviet troops, but for a revolutionary struggle against both.

30. For instance, today the task of revolutionaries vis-a-vis the Vietnam war is to call on the Vietnamese workers and peasants to organize independently and struggle against both the US and ARVN troops and against the DRVN and NLF troops.

31. The Trotskyist position of military support to the bourgeoisie is conditional support to the two stage theory of revolution: In times of war we support the bourgeoisie. We call for their victory today and the victory of the

proletariat tomorrow. This is an utterly false policy and can only lead to the prostration of the proletariat at the feet of its "own" bourgeoisie *a la* the Social-Democrats and the Stalinists. The concrete question posed throughout the world today (not just in the advanced countries, but the colonial and semi-colonial countries as well) is workers' power or capitalist power. We must wage a struggle for the former; a struggle which can not be successful by supporting the capitalists.

32. Along with our opposition on the colonial question is our opposition to military support to the democratic bourgeoisie and their popular fronts against Fascism. The democratic bourgeoisie is not ever and always democratic, but can easily turn on the workers and institute a Fascism of its own when it finds it propitious. We call on the workers to break from the popular front and struggle against it. We do not support the victory of the popular front, but the victory of the working class. The two are mutually exclusive. We must point out that the democratic capitalists, no less so than the Fascists, are the enemies of the proletariat and must be struggled against and defeated concurrent with the struggle against the Fascists.

33. As we stated above, in the epoch of imperialist decay national questions are superseded by class questions; bourgeois-democratic tasks are superseded by proletarian socialist tasks. Thus, it is our opinion that the question of the right of nations to a separate state obfuscates the class questions if raised to an agitational level. This, as Rosa Luxemburg pointed out, was an error on the part of the Bolsheviks which strengthened bourgeois nationalism and divided the workers of the Russian Empire rather than bringing them together. We hold that the question of separation and statehood should be restricted to the general, propagandistic, programatic level, *i.e.*, we support the right of all nations to have their own state. We do not agitate around this right, nor zero in on the right of a particular nation (*e.g.* Palestine). Our task is to unite the workers of all nations in the struggle against capitalism. To agitate around this aspect of the national question obfuscates the class question and



reinforces national divisions within the proletariat.

34. There is only one revolutionary leadership for the working class. That is the vanguard party. The party intervenes in various situations such as elections, united fronts, conferences, etc. with its program, the revolutionary program. To do otherwise is to shirk the tasks imposed upon it by historical necessity.

35. The party intervenes in the trade unions through its party fractions. This is a direct intervention of the party with its full program. Of course, we do not raise every position on every leaflet or in every statement. While we may enter caucuses not based on the party's program, we do not initiate such caucuses. The caucuses which we build are in fact only caucuses in their relationship to the trade unions. Our caucuses are organizationally and politically subordinate to the party. Caucus membership is restricted to party members. For those advanced workers who are attracted to our politics, but do not wish to join the party, we organize propaganda circles which would participate actively in conjunction with the party fraction at trade union interventions.

36. We oppose the call for a Labor Party. Likewise, we oppose electoral activity in general. While participation in elections or giving critical support to another working class party is not unprincipled, it is a tactic which should be used only in exceptional circumstances. Electoral activity tends to reinforce the illusions of the working class in elections and the bourgeois state. Thus, in general, any gains made through electoral activity are offset by the deadening effect on the development of revolutionary consciousness in the working class. Does this mean that we oppose the call for workers to break from the capitalist parties and build their own party? Not at all. We call on the workers to join and build the vanguard party. There are not two "parties of the working class." There is only one: the vanguard party. All other tendencies within the labor movement, including a Labor Party, are obstacles and must be destroyed by the revolutionary workers organized in the

vanguard party.

37. The concept of a Social-Democratic-Stalinist coalition government in Europe was put forward by the Fourth International after the Second Imperialist World War. The rationale for this position was that these parties would then prove to the workers that they did not deserve their support. However, rather than calling on the workers to support these unsupportable parties, the Fourth International should have called on the workers to break from them. Had the Fourth International been revolutionary, it would have pointed out that the Social-Democrats and Stalinists were sell-outs and did not deserve the support of the working class. When the workers are sold out by a Social-Democratic, Stalinist or Labor Party they will remember not only the party which sold them out, but also the party that told them to put the sellouts in office.

38. We do not initiate united fronts. While we participate in united fronts called by other organizations, it is not our task to organize a forum for the reformist parties. We do, however, initiate united demonstrations around slogans which we can support. We also initiate united fronts in trade union situations (strikes, etc.) and defense cases.

39. The concept that a transitional demand is a demand which will lead the workers to see the necessity of socialism through struggle around that demand, is a spontaneist conception. It is only through the subjective intervention of the vanguard party that the workers will see the necessity for socialism. In the absence of this subjective intervention "transitional demands" will be seen as nothing more than reforms of capitalism. It is not merely through struggle, but through party intervention on the subjective level, in pointing to the necessity of the socialist revolution, that the class consciousness of the proletariat will be raised.

40. In 1921 the Bolshevik Party ceased to be a revolutionary party. The struggle of the Left Opposition and the International Communist League was a centrist struggle and thus doomed to failure. The inability of Trotskyism to come to grips with reality in the Soviet Union sounded its death knell at the moment of its birth. The birth of the Fourth



International in 1938 was not a momentous revolutionary occasion, but merely the construction of a left-centrist international grouping only quantitatively better than the London Bureau.

41. In 1940 the split in the SWP was a split along political class lines. The revolutionary internationalists formed the Workers Party, while the centrist defenders of Soviet imperialism remained in the Socialist Workers Party and the Fourth International. However, since the bulk of the Workers Party cadre were petty bourgeois, had been trained in the school of Trotskyism, maintained the incorrect Bolshevik program on the national question and failed to grapple successfully with the class nature of the Soviet Union, they were unable to maintain a revolutionary character throughout the war and degenerated to centrism with their support to the "Three Theses" of the IKD in 1942. The degeneration of the WP continued at a rapid rate until 1948-49 when they made the plunge into reformist politics.

42. In 1947, Nathalia Sedova, Grandizo Munis and Benjamin Peret wrote in an open letter to the PCI:

On the other hand, out of the tendency supporting the defense of Russia if it does not rectify itself, will emerge a new reformism, such as was already emerging from the "old bolsheviks" when Lenin intervened with his April Theses.

These Comrades who along with the French state capitalist minority and the majority of the Italian section composed the healthiest elements in the Fourth International during the post-war period hit the nail right on the head. In fact, the "new reformism" emerged at the Third World Congress in 1951 in the form of Pabloism.

43. In 1953 a split occurred in the Fourth International. The split entailed the breaking of the centrist parties (SWP, SLL, OCI and their supporters) from the reformist Fourth International of Pablo, Frank, Germain and Maitan. The SLL, SWP and OCI, true to their centrist nature (which by now had become right-centrism), organized a loose federation for international collaboration, the International Committee.

44. The Socialist Workers Party became a reformist party in 1957 with the chasing after of the Gatesites (a right-wing split from the Communist Party), the organization of a student youth group, the calling upon the imperialists to enforce bourgeois democracy in the South, the perspective that working class revolution in the Soviet Union could unfold as a series of reforms, and the move toward reunification with the reformist Fourth International. Its degeneration continued as it transformed what had been a tactic of orienting toward students and petty bourgeois layers into a strategy. In 1970 with the invention of the "New Radicalization" thesis, the SWP ceased to be a working class party and has since been a petty bourgeois party with a bourgeois program.

45. Even though the Fourth International was never a revolutionary international, it is our position that as the various centrists and reformists have totally besmirched its name, and in so far as the concept of a Fourth International is tied inexorably to Trotskyism, it is necessary to call for the building of a new, Fifth International. This international would, however, not be a Trotskyist International, but an international; based on revolutionary Marxism.

46. We encourage all Trotskyists to break from Trotskyism and take the road of revolutionary Marxism. This is an absolute necessity in order to further the building of the International Party of Revolutionary Workers (Fifth International). Trotskyism or Marxism? Which path will you choose?



*Trotskyism is not the direct continuity of Leninism, but the continuity of Lenin's theories from 1921-1923 when he, himself had broken from Leninism.*



# Trade Unions Today

## Which Way for the Trade Unions?

by David Ross

*Trade Unions Today will be a regular feature of Workers' Truth. Future issues will contain articles dealing with the problems facing various individual trade unions as well as issues relating to all trade unions. With this issue we begin the serialization of an article by David Ross. This article which outlines the general perspectives of the Revolutionary Workers Group for the trade unions will consist of three parts. The first part printed in this issue deals with some of the misconceptions some younger workers have about trade unions and also deals with the question of revolutionary syndicalism. The second part which will be printed in our April issue will discuss the formation of the CIO during the 1930's and the role of socialist organizations in the process. It will also outline the changes which took place in the trade union movement in the fifties and the direction in which trade unions are headed today. The third part will be printed in our May issue and will take up some of the alternatives provided by various socialist groupings and will elaborate on our program for the trade unions.*

When anyone mentions trade unions what do we usually think of? What does a trade union mean to us? For many young workers (and some of the older ones) who have only come into contact with the heavily bureaucratized trade unions of today, a trade union is just another organization which takes money out of our paycheck and gives us nothing in return. Too often workers who are fed up with conditions in their workplace blame not only management, but also the union itself, not just the sell-out union leadership. Many young workers are saying, "Why do I need a union? It doesn't do anything for me. It's just another part of the corrupt establishment."

While it is true that most union leaders (and in fact all of the top

union leaders) are part of the corrupt establishment and are more interested in filling their wallets than in serving the needs of the workers that they supposedly represent, that does not necessarily mean that the unions themselves are corrupt and unnecessary. Workers have waged valiant and oftentimes violent struggles against the capitalists in order to have unions. The capitalists would like nothing better than to have the workers decide that they do not want unions. This would save the capitalists the trouble of smashing them. Everyone who feels that unions are useless should just stop and think how far he would get bargaining with the boss by himself rather than united collectively with the rest of the workers in

this union. Not very far no doubt. Just ask the workers in the plants that have no unions.

One thing that these workers should remember is that the trade unions have not always been what they are today with their present leadership. Nor do they have to remain that way. Ask some of the old-timers who were around for the militant strike struggles of the 1930's and the formation of the CIO. In the '30's the rank-and-file workers spearheaded the drive to organize unskilled workers in basic industry into trade unions. It was the rank-and-file workers who led the sit-down strikes in Flint, Michigan which were significant in the birth of the United Auto Workers. It was rank-and-file militants and socialists from the Communist League of



America who led the great Minneapolis Teamster strike of 1934 which spearheaded an organizing drive in what was then the country's most notorious open shop town. Socialists from the American Workers Party led by A.J. Muste led a struggle which united both employed and unemployed workers in the victorious organizing drive against the bosses in the Toledo Auto-Lite strike. Worker militants from the Communist Party and other rank-and-filers shut down the city of San Francisco in a general strike in defense of the longshoremen.

Today if you go to one of the regular monthly union meetings when there is no big contract negotiation coming up there will probably be about 20 or 30 (mostly older) workers out of a local numbering in the hundreds. Meetings are very short with the Local Executive Committee ramming through recommendations sometimes without even a vote, let alone discussion. The bureaucrats use union funds to support (illegally) various Republican and Democratic candidates for office. They lead (or try to) the ranks into movements which are directly counter to the interests of the American and international working class. Two examples of this are the Teamster scabbing and raiding on the United Farmworkers Union and the "Buy America" campaign endorsed whole-heartedly by the leadership of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union and most other AFL-CIO bureau-

crats. Teamster president Frank Fitzsimmons has even gone so far as to propose a united bloc of the Teamsters and the agribusiness bosses against the Farmworkers. One Teamster official has been quoted as saying that, "maybe the growers would rather have their workers organized by a trade union than a 'civil rights organization.'" And what about the workers? This is just one of the grosser examples of union bureaucrats pointing out that as far as they are concerned the unions should be for the benefit of the bosses and to hell with the workers!

In fact, today the point has been reached where the union bureaucrats actually use the union apparatuses to police the workers for the capitalists. Leonard Woodcock (UAW), George Meany (AFL-CIO Pres.), I.W. Abel (Steelworkers), Fitzsimmons, and Paul Hall (Seafarers) sit on Nixon's "labor-management advisory committee" (read rubber stamp) to the Cost of Living Council which is the new name for the Pay Board. Meany, Hall, Woodcock, Abel, C.L. Dennis (Railway Clerks), John Lyons (Ironworkers) and Lane Kirkland (secretary of the AFL-CIO) are all on Nixon's Productivity Commission. The task of this Commission is to extract as much work using as few workers as possible (the rest going on unemployment until they have to become "welfare chisellers") at the least possible expense for the capitalists. Such is the role that the labor bureaucrats play today (of

course their role was no better in the past, except that then the unions were a little more democratic and they were forced by rank-and-file pressure to do a little for the workers). In fact, they have gone so far as to have one of their own, Peter Brennan of the New York building trades unions, sit in Nixon's cabinet as Secretary of Labor. Brennan won't do much more than sit though. He'll have about as much to say about labor policy as Secretary of State what's-his-name (it's not Kissinger) has to say about foreign policy.

What about unions in "the good old days?" There were, of course, all kinds of trade unions in the past. Those which were most militant were those which organized industrial workers. In 1905 the Industrial Workers of the World was founded in Chicago. The *Preamble of the Industrial Workers of the World* adopted at the founding convention begins:

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things in life.

Between these two classes a struggle must go on until all the toilers come together on the political as well as on the industrial field, and take and hold that which they produce by their labor through an economic organization of the working class without affiliation with any po-



litical party. The economic organization which the IWW referred to was, of course, the IWW, a trade union. However, while economic organizations must take political stands, they themselves can not be the political instrument for overthrowing the rule of the capitalists. A political instrument is necessary for that. That instrument is the revolutionary party. The IWW was opposed to political parties as a reaction to the concentration of the Socialist Party on electoral politics. They proposed instead to organize the workers at the point of production and through this revolutionary trade union overthrow the bosses and proceed to the building of a workers' republic. This belief in revolutionary trade unionism without political parties is what the communist movement has referred to as revolutionary syndicalism. While its intentions are revolutionary, it does not see the correct method for bringing about that revolution. The Communist (Third) Interna-

tional had this to say about syndicalism at its Second Congress:

The Communist International decisively rejects the view that the proletariat can accomplish its revolution without having an independent political party of its own....Political power cannot be seized, organized, and operated except through a political party....

...The propaganda conducted by the revolutionary syndicalists and adherents of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) against the necessity for an independent workers' party objectively therefore helped and helps only to support the bourgeoisie and the counter-revolutionary 'social-democrats'. In their propaganda against a communist party, which they want to replace by trade unions or by formless 'general' workers' unions, the syndicalists and IWW come close to the avowed opportunists. After the defeat of the 1905 revolution the Russian mensheviks for many

years advocated the idea of a so-called workers' congress which was to replace the revolutionary party of the working class....The revolutionary syndicalists and IWW are anxious to fight against the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, but do not know how. They fail to grasp that without an independent political party the working class is a body without a head.

Revolutionary syndicalism and industrialism mark a step forward only in comparison with the old, musty, counter-revolutionary ideology of the Second International. But in comparison with revolutionary Marxism, i.e. with communism, syndicalism and industrialism are a step backward....

The working class cannot win victory over the bourgeoisie by the general strike alone...The proletariat must resort to armed insurrection. Whoever has grasped that must also understand that an organized political party is essential, that formless workers' unions

*Continued on page 33*

### Revolutionary Workers Group Program for the Trade Unions

- \* INDEPENDENCE OF THE TRADE UNIONS FROM THE STATE!
- \* DEMOCRATIC RANK-AND-FILE CONTROL OF THE TRADE UNIONS!
- \* NO SUPPORT TO CAPITALIST GOVERNMENTS!
- \* INTERNATIONAL WORKING CLASS SOLIDARITY!
- \* A SLIDING SCALE OF WAGES AND HOURS-- JOBS FOR ALL!
- \* ORGANIZE THE UNORGANIZED AND THE UNEMPLOYED!
- \* ARMED WORKERS' DEFENSE GUARDS!
- \* END THE SPECIAL OPPRESSION OF WOMEN!
- \* END THE SPECIAL OPPRESSION OF BLACKS, LATINS AND OTHER MINORITIES!
- \* END COMPANY-CONTROLLED SENIORITY SYSTEMS--FULL RIGHTS FOR YOUNG WORKERS!
- \* NATIONALIZATION OF ALL INDUSTRY, TRANSPORTATION, ETC. UNDER THE COLLECTIVE CONTROL OF THE ENTIRE WORKING CLASS!
- \* BUILD THE INTERNATIONAL PARTY OF REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS (FIFTH INTERNATIONAL)!
- \* A WORKERS' REPUBLIC!



# The International Workers' Movement: A Short History

by David Ross

## Part One:

## Why Build an International?

The international workers' movement has had a long and stormy history. Many parties and organizations have struggled for hegemony over the movement to overthrow capitalism, and today is no exception. Class conscious workers in the United States and around the world are faced with a myriad of organizations, all claiming to be the instrument by which capitalism will be overthrown and replaced by socialism. Some of these organizations claim historic continuity with one or more of the various organizations which have spearheaded the socialist movement since the mid-nineteenth century. Obviously only one of the various methods and schemas proposed by the various parties can be the correct method in achieving our goal: the destruction of capitalism *on a world scale* and the building of socialism. It is important to

remember that capitalism must be destroyed everywhere before socialism can be achieved. We have seen the impossibility of building "socialism in one country" in the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba (to mention only the three most common examples of "communist society"). This is not the "socialism" or "communism" which we want or need. In fact, it is just another form of capitalism, state capitalism. It is necessary for the international working class to do more than replace one group of exploiters with another.

The purpose of this pamphlet is to outline briefly a history of the international workers' movement since the founding of the International Workingmen's Association (First International) by Karl Marx in 1864 until the present. I also intend to prove the necessity of building a new international revolutionary workers' party. None of the so-called "revolutionary internationalists" in existence can serve the purpose for which they were ostensibly organized. We must build our party on the firm foundations provided by the revolutionary work of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Luxemburg, Trotsky and others. We must understand not only their achievements, but also their errors, for as Marx wrote in *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*:

Hegel remarks somewhere that all facts and personages of great importance in world history occur, as it were, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce. (p. 15)

This, of course, is not to say that the entire work of these great revolutionaries was tragic (nor even a significant part of it, with the exception of Trotsky). However, we must remember that they were human and even armed with the correct method and program, humans do make mistakes. Marx, Engels, Lenin, Luxemburg and Trotsky were no exceptions. Marxism is not a religion. We have no need for saints.

The building of an international revolutionary workers' party is no easy task. It is not to be done in a haphazard and pragmatic manner. That is, we can not say, "Well, we are an international revolutionary workers' party. We have no real program or theoretical



understanding of the tasks before us, but, no matter, we will do whatever seems to work as problems confront us." At first glance this may seem strange. Why not do "what seems to work?" some may ask. The answer is simple. What may work as an individual instance abstracted out of the historic conflict of class forces on a world scale, quite often ends up acting as a break on the development of the class struggle. This method is a slipshod make-do method and can only lead to eventual defeat. As we shall see later on the pragmatists have consistently moved farther and farther away from the class struggle and closer and closer to the class enemy. It is, after all, much easier to collaborate with the bourgeoisie than to wage a consistent struggle against it.

While it is true that we must choose the correct strategy and tactics in order to succeed in our struggle (and in some instances such as strikes we must decide on which tactic to apply in each different instance or stage of the strike) we must do so through the use of the dialectical materialist method, the Marxist method, not the bourgeois method of pragmatism. That is, we can not take each situation as it comes and abstract it out of the historical continuity of the class struggle. It is necessary to develop a *Weltanschauung* or "world-view." While the workers' struggle develops at different tempos and under different conditions in differ-

ent countries, we must constantly bear in mind the fact that all of these struggles, no matter what stage they are at, are interconnected by the very dominance of capitalist society on a world scale.

In order to succeed in our tasks, in fact, in order even to begin to tackle them, it is necessary to understand our adversary and its historical development: capitalism. It was feasible for the capitalists to take on feudalism without this knowledge. However, for us it is not so easy. To struggle against capitalism, one must understand it. To fail to do so is suicide. *What Are We Fighting? And Why?*

It is, of course, impossible to give a full analysis of the nature, history, and development of capitalism here. Instead I will try to point out some of the illusions which the ideologues of the capitalist class try to palm off on the working class as reality. For instance, we are taught in school that capitalism has always existed in some form or another ever since humanity became civilized. Along with this, and more important as far as the capitalist rulers of this country are concerned, we are taught that capitalism has always existed and that it always will exist because it is the best form of society. Both of these statements are completely false. It is true that ever since the advent of "civilization", that is, ever since humanity lifted itself out of barbar-

ism and began to organize itself into class societies, most of the wealth of society has been produced by "the many" and controlled by "the few." However, that is a characteristic common to all forms of class society, not just capitalism.

In earlier class societies, slavery and feudalism, labor was organized in a different manner than it is under capitalism. Production, too, had a different thrust than it does under capitalism. In slave society the laboring class was owned outright by the rulers. The slaveowner provided for the basic necessities of the slave in return for the use of the slave's labor power in the production of goods for the use of the slaveowner. Of course, this was not a simple contractual agreement between the slave and the owner: "You work for me, and I'll feed, clothe, and house you." The slave could not change masters as he pleased and could be sold by his current master to someone else just like a cow, a pig, or a vase.

In time slavery became an obstacle to the development of the productive forces. Society could not expand and progress if it remained tied to the slave economy. It is for this reason that slave society collapsed (not because the Romans were immoral and had orgies) and had to be replaced by a historically more progressive system. That system was feudalism. Under feudalism, which was fundamentally an agrarian system, the laborer or serf as he was called was tied to the land. While "tied" is obviously a figure of speech, it is close to being a literal truth. The



serf could not be sold to another feudal lord, but if his current master transferred his land to another feudal lord, the serf went right along with it, the same as if he were a tree or a rock (the difference being that trees and rocks don't produce value and serfs do. Thus, the lords preferred serfs to trees and rocks.).

Eventually feudalism, like slavery, became a fetter on the productive forces. It soon became time for a new progressive economic system to replace it. That system was capitalism. During the later years of feudal society a new class grew out of the merchants and craftsmen in the towns. This class was the *bourgeoisie* (literally town-dwellers) or capitalist class. They based their wealth on the accumulation of capital, i.e., the accumulation of tools, labor, etc. for the production of commodities for exchange. The production of the slaves and serfs had been basically for the personal needs and luxuries of their masters. The production of capitalism is not for use-values (the value of a commodity being based on its usefulness), but for exchange-values. The production motive of the capitalist was not (and is not today) production for necessities (or even luxuries) like the old ruling classes, but production for profit, pure and simple.

Not only was this capitalist class at one time progressive, it was also at one time revolutionary.

The "Puritan Revolution" in 17th century England, the Great French Revolution at the end of the 18th century, and both the American Revolution of 1776 and the American Civil War were revolutionary struggles carried out under the leadership of the bourgeoisie to wipe out outmoded economic systems and the ruling classes based on them. The revolutionary bourgeois regimes instituted the broadest forms of democracy ever seen at the time. The laborer became freed from either ownership by an individual or "ownership by the land." Capitalism produced a society in which the laborer was paid a wage and could "work for whomever he pleased." As most of us know this is a sugary way of saying that in order to survive and support a family the worker has to sell his labor power (the ability to work) to whatever capitalist wishes to buy it and when the capitalist has no more use for him he can be thrown on the scrap heap like a worn-out pair of shoes.

Under capitalism the worker produces much more than he receives in wages. The rest is appropriated by the capitalist who owns the means of production at which the worker works. This surplus-value is then used to accumulate more capital for the capitalist. Such is the drive of capitalist production. The worker is paid a meager wage so that he will produce surplus-value which is appropriated by the capitalist who will use it to exploit more

workers who are doing the same thing as the first worker. This, by the way gives the lie to the old fairy tale about the hard-working capitalist entrepreneur. While it is true that in the early stages of capitalism the capitalist also had to work and that certain small businessmen (e.g. shopkeepers) have to work, the ruling capitalists, like Rockefeller, Kennedy, DuPont, etc. never worked a day in their lives and everyone knows it. They don't even count their own money. They hire someone else to do it for them! The process is the same everywhere. The problems of all workers are fundamentally the same, and while the enemy may have a different face here and there, he is still the same enemy: the world capitalist class.

Capitalism has not always dominated on a world scale. When capitalism first came into existence it was limited at first to a few European cities and later to a few European countries. However, with the Industrial Revolution and the introduction of machinery, capitalism expanded throughout the world. Because during the 19th century capitalism and the capitalist class were progressive, they expanded and developed the productive forces on a world scale until the point was reached when the entire world was controlled by the capitalists. At this point the competitive features of capitalism (so often referred to by Democratic and Republican politicians as the "heart of our (read capitalists and their lackeys) free enter-



prise system") became superseded by the centralization and concentration of capital and the power which goes with it into the hands of the banks and large trusts. This stage of capitalism by Lenin "imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism" in a pamphlet of the same name. Imperialism brought with it the tendency toward more and more wars of conquest and division and redivision of the colonial world by the advanced capitalist countries (the United States included). At this point capitalism ceased to play a progressive role. Like slavery and feudalism before it, it had become a fetter on the growth of the productive forces. Capitalism could now provide nothing but the perspective of war and destruction. While it is true that American workers enjoyed a relatively high living standard during the '50's and '60's, this was done at the expense of their brothers and sisters in other countries. Now even with the superexploitation of workers overseas, the American ruling class is moving to drive the American workers "back to the '30's."

Marx wrote that capitalism produces its own gravedigger. In actuality it has produced two: the working class and nuclear weaponry. One way or another capitalist society is doomed: either by working class revolution and the struggle for socialism or by the bombing of the entire world "back to the Stone Age" in a Third World War. The latter alternative is all too pro-

bable if the working class *throughout the world* does not take it upon itself to overthrow its masters and lead the world to socialism. Socialism or barbarism. There is no middle ground.

#### *A Look At Past Struggles*

Now that we have had a look at our adversary and what is at stake in the struggle, we can move on to a look at the forms which this struggle has taken in the past. For it is only through studying the achievements and failures of past organizations of the working class that we will be able to build an organization which can successfully do battle with the most powerful ruling class in the history of the world, a ruling class which exists on a world scale and must be fought on a world scale. Just as an isolated strike is easily defeated by a national corporation, so can a workers' struggle isolated in one nation be defeated unless the workers of all countries come to the aid of the struggling workers through a revolutionary workers' international party.

The earliest proletarian uprising occurred when capitalism still maintained an isolated embryonic existence in a few cities in Italy and the Low Countries (present-day Belgium and Holland). In June 1378 the cloth workers in Florence rose up in rebellion and seized power temporarily in Florence. The revolt was doomed to defeat, however, since capitalism had not even developed on a national, let alone a world scale. As such the Flo-

rentine proletariat was very weak and in no position to reorganize production in its own interests. After about a month, the Florentine workers, who had simply closed down the factories, relinquished power to the Florentine merchants and cloth magnates.

Probably one of the most famous futile attempt at isolated struggle which achieved fleeting success, was the Paris Commune of 1871. In the turbulence of events following the Franco-Prussian War, the Parisian workers who had been armed by the French bourgeoisie to fight the Prussians, seized power in Paris when the French rulers fled the city. However, capitalism had still not played out its historically progressive role, and the Parisian workers were isolated and defeated by the Prussians who restored Paris to the French capitalists.

The only time that the proletariat has seized power in an entire country was in Russia in 1917. The workers there under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party took power and held it until 1921. During the period of 1917-1921 the Russian workers bravely fought off attempts to restore capitalist rule by both the Russian capitalists and foreign imperialists. However, no aid came to the beleaguered Russian workers from their comrades in Western Europe. Lenin had often said that if there was no revolution in the West that the dictatorship of the proletariat would fall in Russia. Due to the failures of the socialist leadership



in the West, the much hoped for revolution did not come. The Russian working class had exhausted itself by 1921 and the Bolsheviks responded to this exhaustion by losing faith in the workers and restoring capitalism.

Other expressions of working class revolt were the Luddite rebellion in England where workers smashed the machinery which was being used to take away their jobs, and the Chartist movement which was a British trade union movement in the mid-nineteenth century. The main thrust of the Chartist movement was for better working conditions for the British worker and for the extension of voting rights to the working class. The main failure of these last movements was the inability to expropriate their masters and organize production in their own interests, and to see their struggle as an international struggle, not a local one.

#### *Trade Union Syndicalism Or Revolutionary Socialism?*

The trade union has been the most widespread organizational form which the class struggle has taken. Trade union consciousness is a spontaneous consciousness and because of that it is a limited consciousness. While seeing the need of combining together against the bosses on economic questions is an advance in consciousness, it is necessary for the working class to develop a full class consciousness, a socialist consciousness.

Basically the trade union

is a defensive organ of the working class. Its role is to defend the economic standard of the workers. However, the fact that it is a defensive tool limits it in the struggle against capital. The trade union and the trade union conscious worker are unable to go beyond the defensive struggle and take the offensive in the struggle to overthrow capital and institute a new society. A revolutionary party armed with a Marxist program is necessary for that.

However, we can draw some lessons from the trade unions. When trade unions first came into existence in the United States they were basically craft unions. That is, those workers who had a certain skill banded together to try to improve their conditions. Several problems arose from this. For instance, workers in the railroad industry might go on strike (and the following schema happened many times). Since the engineers weren't on strike, while the brakemen and trainmen were, the engineers would scab on their brothers' strike. It became necessary to organize industry on an industry-wide scale. In such a case if one craft went out, all crafts would go out since they were all in the same union. This also enabled the unskilled workers in most major industries to become organized. The development of industrial unions in the 1930's was a great step forward for American labor.

Likewise workers can not organize a revolutionary party merely on the national level. It is necessary to go beyond narrow national interests if we are to be successful in our struggle. To those who say: "Why bother with international ties? All we need is a good general strike," we must point out that this syndicalist attitude is a great error and has led to failure and defeat time and again in the past. Capitalism rules internationally and it must be fought internationally. Further on we will see how some of these same attitudes led to the degeneration of working class parties in the past.

Time is rapidly running out on capitalism, what with the threat of nuclear annihilation and ecological disaster. The question before us is: Will the capitalists be able to drag the working class down with them or will the workers organize a strong international revolutionary party to throw out *all* the bosses and build socialism? Just as the building of industrial unions was a qualitative step forward for American labor in the 1930's, likewise the forging of a strong international revolutionary workers' party will be a qualitative and decisive step forward for workers throughout the world and for the struggle for socialism!

**BUILD THE INTERNATIONAL  
PARTY OF REVOLUTIONARY  
WORKERS (FIFTH INTERNATIONAL!  
FOR THE WORLD SOCIALIST  
REVOLUTION!**

*To Be Continued*



# Manifesto of the Revolutionary Workers Group

It has been 125 years, one and one-quarter century since Marx and Engels outlined the basic tenets of revolutionary socialism in *The Communist Manifesto*. Contained within this revolutionary document were the needs and tasks of the working class movement in 1848. While 125 years have passed since its writing, the same fundamental tasks lay before the world working class today: the overthrow of capitalism and the construction of a classless socialist society. It is only the successful carrying out of these tasks that will save humanity from the destruction which awaits it if the capitalist system is allowed to continue.

Seventy-one years after the writing of *The Communist Manifesto* the Communist International was founded in Moscow. This revolutionary international was founded during the world working class upsurge which followed the First Imperialist World War and the victorious working class revolution in Russia of October 1917. The Communist International set for itself the task of organizing the world proletariat in the struggle to overthrow capitalism. It is this struggle which we must carry forward today. When the Communist International was founded the world was in a great period of turmoil. Capitalist society was on the brink of collapse and the working class was surging forward throughout Europe. However, the Communist International was unable to carry out the tasks set before it and the European and colonial working masses were defeated and capitalism allowed to stabilize itself for a brief period.

This stabilization ended with the economic crisis of the 1930's and the Second Imperialist World War of 1939-1945. The barbarism of capitalist society in its death agony was amply displayed during this war with the genocide of 6 million European Jews, the fire bombing of Dresden and the atom bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Once again the world was thrown into a state of turmoil. Working class strike waves swept Europe and the United States. National liberation struggles broke out throughout the colonial world. However, once again the working class was thwarted in its bid to fundamentally change society. The working class throughout the world lacked the revolutionary leadership necessary to assure a successful struggle for power. Instead the workers were tied to the slaves of imperialism: the Social-Democratic and Communist Parties. The Soviet Union had long since ceased to be a workers' republic and was instead rapidly becoming the second most powerful imperialist nation in the world. The various Communist Parties in Europe, totally tied to defending the interests of the Russian state capitalists sold out struggle after struggle of the European workers. Capitalism was once again saved from revolutionary destruction by the worldwide crisis in proletarian leadership. With the state capitalization of Eastern Europe and the collapse of the working class movement internationally, capitalism was once again able to stabilize itself temporarily.

The temporary stabilization of capitalism and the technological advances made possible by computers, transistors and atomic energy led many to believe that capitalism had solved its internal contradictions and that the task of the workers was merely to get a bigger piece of the pie. Nothing, however, could be further from the truth. Throughout the so-called "boom" of the fifties and sixties, the internal laws of capitalism described by Marx continued to operate. While their effects were not always apparent on the surface, they were there just the same. Today the capitalist system is like a sore that has accumulated puss inside it and is about to burst. Capitalist economy is rapidly coming apart at the seams. As this occurs the capitalists internationally are forced to wage war against the working class in order to save the Almighty King: Profit.



This is the meaning of the various "New Economic Policies" being carried out in various countries. Nixon's Phase Three in the United States and Heath's Phase Two in Great Britain are both part of the international attack being made on the living conditions of the world working class by the international representatives of capital. The capitalists in the advanced countries are no longer able to pacify their workers with wage gains made possible by the superexploitation of the workers in the colonial and semi-colonial countries. In order to preserve and advance their profit-making the capitalists are forced now to cut the wages of the workers in the advanced countries and to combine with this productivity increases in the form of speed-up and unemployment. Inflation is soaring and there is nothing that the capitalists can do about it. Paper money is rapidly becoming worthless as each country attempts to maneuver itself into a better trading position through the devaluation of its currency. What we see today are the first stages of all out trade war which can only be a prelude to an all out shooting war.

At the same time that the capitalists wage an all-out offensive on the living conditions of the workers they seek to wipe out all the rights of the working class under bourgeois democracy. Many of these rights were gained only through long struggles. However, the working class can not allow itself to be misled by those who would call upon it to defend democracy against the strong-statists, Bonapartists and Fascists by allying with democratic capitalists. All the capitalists, democratic and Fascist alike, are the enemies of the working class and must be thrown out! The only defense against Fascism is the overthrow of capitalism!

Once again as in the Second Imperialist World War the world was treated with the sight of capitalism at its barbaric best with the war in Indochina. This war which is currently in a state of suspended animation is a war fought between two capitalist ruling cliques and their imperialist backers, the United States on one hand and Russia and China on the other. No matter who eventually gains control of South Vietnam,

the state capitalists of Hanoi or the comprador capitalists and landlords of Saigon, the conditions of the Vietnamese workers and peasants will be the same. They will be oppressed, suppressed and exploited. It is the Vietnamese workers and peasants, however, who have done the fighting and dying for both sides. It was the Vietnamese workers and peasants who have had their homes completely destroyed by the barbaric terror bombing of the United States imperialists. It was the Vietnamese workers and peasants who put their faith in the Stalinist leadership of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the National Liberation Front/Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam only to be sold down the river in favor of bettering the relationships between the imperialists of the United States, Russia and China. Only when the Vietnamese workers and peasants break from their Stalinist misleaders and organize independent workers' and peasants' councils and an independent workers' and peasants' army to struggle for power against both the North and South Vietnamese capitalists will they be able to free themselves from the yoke of imperialist domination. There can be no peace in Indochina until there is workers' power in Indochina!

Today we see rumblings of discontent within the so-called "socialist" countries. Workers have waged struggles in Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia and even in the Soviet Union itself. In fact even the "island paradise" of Cuba is facing working class discontent. No longer will the workers in these countries be lulled by the Stalinist propaganda that their's is a socialist society. With each passing day it becomes clearer to them that their lot in society is the same as that of their brothers and sisters who live under the heel of Western imperialism. As the economies of the state capitalist countries feel the squeeze of the current world economic crisis of capitalism their rulers, too, are forced to turn more and more against the living conditions of their workers. The workers in the state capitalist countries have shown, however, that they will not take this lying down. What is sorely lacking, though, is a revolutionary socialist party thoroughly grounded in the Marxist analysis of the state capitalist soci-



eties which can provide leadership and direction for the struggles of these workers. Only when such parties are built will these struggles reach the point of the seizure of power by the proletariat. The state capitalist countries and their Stalinist rulers are in no way proletarian! Capitalism must be overthrown in Russia, China and their satellites the same as everywhere else! The workers have no power under state capitalism economic or political. They must seize power through revolutionary action!

The pages of the capitalist press are today filled with talk of detente. The spirit of detente covers the world. However, this is nothing more than the lull before the storm. Events are rapidly moving toward a Third Imperialist World War, one which could spell the end of humanity. The so-called spirit of detente is nothing more than a period of horse-trading before the imperialists finally choose up sides for the massive conflict which is inevitable unless the working class intervenes by destroying the capitalist system through revolutionary action before they are destroyed along with it through the nuclear holocaust which would no doubt mark the finale of a Third Imperialist World War. Right now the capitalists are jockeying for allies. While the United States imperialists talk friendly to the Chinese, the Japanese imperialists talk friendly to the Russians. When the Americans talk to the Russians, the Japanese talk to the Chinese. While this game of musical chairs goes on the European imperialists are attempting to consolidate their forces in the Common Market. However, they are rapidly finding that the differing interests of the various national ruling classes are so fundamentally counterposed that even now their attempt at political integration is blowing up in their faces. We will no doubt soon see the complete collapse of the Common Market as the European rulers join in the game of musical imperialist chairs now being played by the American, Russian, Chinese and Japanese imperialists. The workers have no interest in the maneuverings of their ruling classes! The interests of the workers are served by uniting with their class brothers and sisters throughout the world not through falling prey

to the patriotic jingoism of their rulers! Trade war or shooting, it is still capitalist war! The workers must remain neutral and organize for the struggle to place themselves in power! It is only with the worldwide victory of workers over capitalists that wars will end!

As the crisis of capitalism deepens it is not only the industrial proletariat which feels the squeeze. More and more semi-proletarian and middle class elements are being crushed and thrown into poverty as the capitalists march on in the neverending quest for profits. Farmers are forced into bankruptcy by large-scale capitalist agribusiness. Teachers, social workers and engineers are thrown out of work and into the unemployment lines. Turned away from employment in the fields for which they have training because there are no jobs, they are told that they are overqualified for other jobs. Thus, education, which was long the dream of every working class parent for their children has been turned against the masses. At the same time that education is being ripped away from working class families through cutbacks and budget slashing those who managed to get an education during the "boom" are unable to put it to any use.

It is absolutely necessary for the party of the proletariat to win over these semi-proletarian and middle class elements to the cause and struggle of the working class. It is necessary to explain to them that only by casting in their lot with the proletariat will they be able to do anything to change society for the better. The urgency of carrying out this task can be seen by the fact that today Italy is going through almost an instant replay of the 1920's when Fascism came to power. If the proletariat does not win the middle class to its cause by proving itself as a strong powerful force able to change society, disgust with the system will be played upon by the Fascists and the middle class will turn away from the proletariat and become the pawns of big business as they become the mass base for the Fascist movements.

At the same time that it must win over the middle class elements to its side, the proletariat must overcome the divisions within its own ranks. These divisions, whether they be of a racial, sexual or generational nature, are fos-



ered, and encouraged by the capitalists. The capitalists realize that so long as the working class remains divided it can not pose a serious threat to the class rule of the capitalists. Today the workers are led into various anti-working class movements by the leadership of the trade unions. These anti-working class movements derive their basis from the divisions within the world working class. Thus, the International Ladies Garment Workers Union bureaucracy and various other AFL-CIO bureaucrats encourage the workers to support the "Buy America" campaign. This movement claims that the Japanese workers are taking jobs from American workers. What is actually happening is that the Japanese capitalists are taking profits from the American capitalists. It is not the job of American workers to help their rulers compete with the Japanese rulers. Instead a program of international solidarity is needed between the Japanese and American workers. The thrust of such a program would be the ouster of both the Japanese and American rulers. In a society ruled by the workers there would be no problem of one country stealing jobs from another.

Another crucial division which must be overcome is the division between white and Black workers in the United States. So long as the white and Black workers are unable to unite around a program of united working class struggle the American working class will face continued defeats at the hands of the capitalists. White workers must realize that the source of job insecurity, poor schools and crime in the streets is not the Black workers, but the capitalist system itself. Likewise Black workers must realize that racism exists not because white workers are inherently evil, but because of the capitalist system and the bourgeoisie's need to keep the working class divided. Any working class program must strive for complete racial equality. White racists and Black nationalists alike in their striving for privileges for one race as against the other must be driven from the ranks of the working class movement! Only through the revolutionary struggle for socialism will racial discrimination be eradicated! There will be no workers' repub-

lic without the unity of Black and white workers!

Historically the most advanced workers have seen the necessity to organize themselves both nationally and internationally in order to wage an effective struggle against capitalism. The International Workingmen's Association (First International) was founded in 1864 by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. The First International organized during the progressive period of capitalism was destroyed by the events surrounding the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71. At the same time, however, that the First International was dissolved, conditions stimulated the development of mass socialist parties on a national basis. In 1889 the mass socialist parties combined to form the Second International. However, from the beginning the Second International parties were hampered by an extremely national orientation and a tendency toward parliamentarism. This led objectively in the direction of reformism. This reformism came out into the open when the mass Social-Democratic parties supported their own bourgeoisies in the First Imperialist World War. The Franco-Prussian War had shown that there was not a sufficient mass base to maintain a revolutionary socialist international. The First Imperialist World War showed that while the base had developed that the current international leadership of the working class was bankrupt and worthless. In 1919 the Communist (Third) International was founded in order to carry out the teachings of Marx and Engels which had been discarded by the reformist leaders of the Second International. The demise of the Third International was brought about not by a war, but by the collapse of the proletarian dictatorship in Russia. The Communist International was totally dominated by the Russian Communist Party, which was to be expected since they had led a successful proletarian revolution. However, by 1921 the Russian Communist Party had lost faith in the working class and had reintroduced capitalism. The Communist International under the leadership of the Russian Communists blinded itself to the gravity of the situation and thus began to base its program on what was best for Russian capitalism. By 1924 it was clear that the Third International

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# Archives of the Revolution

## 1922 Appeal of the Russian "Workers' Truth" Group

*Archives of the Revolution* will be a regular feature of *Workers' Truth*. Each month will reprint for the benefit of our readers part or all of a particular speech, article or document from the vast and rich heritage of the revolutionary Marxist movement. We have chosen the 1922 Appeal of the Russian *Workers' Truth* group. In 1917 the Russian working class had seized power under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party. The Bolsheviks expected that this would soon be followed by revolutions in the advanced capitalist countries of Western Europe. Almost immediately after the seizure of power by the Russian workers they were forced to fight a long and exhausting war against counter-revolutionary forces supported by all of the imperialist countries. Although the Russian working class won the war it was completely exhausted after its victory. At the same time capitalist economic relations were springing up in the backward predominately peasant country that was the Soviet Union 1920-1921. The Bolshevik Party responded to the exhaustion and apathy of the Russian workers and the corresponding development of private agriculture and the black market by losing faith in the Russian workers and the world proletariat as a whole. Seeing no revolutions which were successful in Europe, they turned their backs on revolution and directed their energies to building up the Russian economy on a capitalist basis. The Bolshevik leaders refused to listen to the revolutionary Workers' Opposition within the party which called on a turn to the trade unions which were the organs of the industrial working class to organize production. The Workers' Opposition was defeated and hounded from the Bolshevik Party. This marked the qualitative degeneration of the Bolshevik Party from a revolutionary party to a centrist party. The revolutionaries around the newspaper *Workers' Truth* called for the workers to organize themselves into a revolutionary party to overthrow the new capitalist relations which had been introduced by the Bolsheviks in their capitulation to the wealthy peasants, merchants and small-scale industrialists (who were the only industrialists to speak of at the time). It is from the name of this revolutionary Russian newspaper that we take the name for our paper *Workers' Truth*. Our reason for printing this clarion call to revolution is for the reason expounded by the Comrades at the end of their appeal, which was made in the form of a call to action: for our work, Comrades!"

"The liberation of the workers can only be the deed of the working class itself." [Marx]

Message to the Revolutionary Proletariat and to All Revolutionary Elements Who Remain Faithful to the Struggling Working Class:

The working class of Russia, small in numbers, unprepared, in a period of complete isolation, accomplished in October 1917, the historically necessary October Revolution. Led to the Russian Communist Party, it has overthrown and destroyed the power of the ruling classes; during long years of revolution and civil war it has firmly contained the pressure of international and Russian reaction.

In spite of the immense material heavy losses sustained by the working class, the October Revolution remains a decisive and heroic event in the history of the struggle of the Russian proletariat. The Russian October Revolution has given the

struggling international proletariat an experience of tremendous value for its struggle against capital.

As a result of the October Revolution all the barriers in the path of the economic development were eliminated: there is no longer any oppression by the landlords, the parasitic czarist bureaucracy, and the bourgeoisie, which relied on reactionary groups of European capitalists. After the successful revolution and civil war, broad perspectives opened before Russia, of rapid transformation into a country of progressive capitalism. In this lies the undoubted and tremendous achievement of the revolution in October.

But what has changed in the position of the working class? The working class of Russia is disorganized; confusion reigns in the minds of the workers: are they in a country of the "dictatorship of the proletariat," as the Communist Party untiringly reiterates by word of mouth and in the press? Or are they in a country of arbitrary rule and ex-



ation, as life tests them at every step. The working class leading a miserable existence at a time when the new bourgeoisie (i.e., the responsible functionaries, plant directors, heads of trusts, chairmen of executive committees, etc.) and Nepmen\* live in luxury and recall in our memory the nature of the life of the bourgeoisie of all times. And again during the hard and difficult years of the struggle for existence lie ahead. But the more complicated the circumstances, the more clarity and organization are necessary for the struggling proletariat. To introduce class clarity into the ranks of the working class of Russia, to aid in every way the organization of the revolutionary powers of the struggling proletariat—is our task.

The Communist Party, which during the years of the revolution was a party of the working class, has become the ruling party, the party of the organizers and directors of the governmental apparatus and economic life on capitalistic bases, with the general backwardness and lack of organization of the working class. The party has more and more lost contact and community with the proletariat. The soviet, party, and trade-union bureaucracies and organizers find themselves in material conditions which are sharply distinguished from the conditions of existence of the working class. Their physical well-being and the stability of their general position depend on the degree to which the toiling masses are excited and subordinated to them. All this makes a contradic-

tion between their interests and a break between the Communist Party and the working class inevitable.

The social existence of the Communist Party itself inevitably determines the corresponding social consciousness, interests and ideals, which contradict the interests of the struggling proletariat.

The Russian Communist Party has become the party of the organizer intelligentsia. The abyss between the Russian Communist Party and the working class is getting deeper and deeper, and this fact cannot be glossed over by any resolutions or decisions of the Communist congresses and conferences, etc.

The NEP, i.e., the rebirth of normal capitalistic relations and intensive economic differentiation among the peasantry, intensified by the famine of 1920-21, has contributed to the pronounced growth of the big kulak stratum in the Russian village. The small-scale, unorganized character of peasant farming, together with the disruption of the means of communication, makes it definite that commercial capital will have a dominant role in the immediate future. At the same time the state is growing in influence as the representative of the nation-wide interests of capital and as the mere directing apparatus of political administration and economic

in countries where capital is on the offensive—the careful selection of comrades and strict conspiratorial secrecy.

For our work, Comrades!

# Still Some Snakes in Ireland

Legend has it that St. Patrick drove all of the snakes out of Ireland and that this is the reason that the Irish celebrate St. Patrick's Day. (Most everyone else simply celebrates it as an excuse to get drunk.)

Whether or not Ireland has ever been free of snakes (we don't think it ever was) it definitely has some around today. These snakes, however don't slither around on the ground, they walk upright on two legs. They don't have scales either, instead they wear tuxedos and white ties and tails. These modern day snakes are the capitalists who control Ireland (North and South) just like they control every other country in the world. These snakes come in three different forms, but each is just as dead-

ly as the other two. The first kind is a foreign snake who wears red white and blue done up in various crosses and x's. He is of course, the old mainstay British imperialism. While British imperialism only has direct control of the North of Ireland it still maintains certain indirect economic control of the "Irish Free State." The second snake wraps itself in green with a smattering of orange and white to show its tolerance. This is the southern Irish capitalist. He is generally a Catholic and hopes to profit from the civil strife in the North. Sometimes he will put on his nationalist hat in order to trick some unsuspecting Irishman (and others) into believing that he is better than the British imperialists, but he is not. He is only poorer and

weaker than his British colleague. The last snake loves to wear orange, but will don the Union Jack when appropriate for staying in power. His major task is to keep the Protestant workers in Ulster so afraid of the Catholic capitalists (as opposed to Protestants) that they will not ally with the Catholic workers against him.

It is definitely time for these snakes to be driven out of Ireland. In fact, it is long overdue. However, the workers can not wait for a saint (Patrick or otherwise) to do the job this time. They must do it themselves. ALL THE CAPITALISTS MUST BE DRIVEN OUT OF IRELAND! FOR A UNITED SOCIALIST IRELAND! FOR THE SOCIALIST UNITED STATES OF EUROPE! FOR THE WORLD-WIDE WORKERS' REPUBLIC!



## ...Indochina

*Continued from page 6*

peace that is no peace is perhaps occurring in Indochina, no one realizes that the struggle has not even begun. We have the only program which can alter this state of affairs once and for all.

We call for:

1. The formation of independent workers' councils under the democratic control of North and South Vietnamese workers.
2. For the creation of a workers and peasants army under the control of wor-

ker and peasant soldier committees, with democratically elected officers. For the victory of the armed proletariat over North and South Vietnamese and American capitalists alike! The NLF and the army of the DRVN and the ARVN must be destroyed by the armed might of the Vietnamese proletariat.

3. The formation of a Vietnamese Revolutionary Workers Party as a disciplined section of the democratic-centralist

International Party of Revolutionary Workers (Fifth International).

4. The dictatorship of the proletariat in Vietnam. Complete control over Vietnamese society by the Vietnamese working class.

The Revolutionary Workers Group, though our resources are meager and our numbers are few, pledge every possible assistance to the Vietnamese working class in the successful execution of this program.

## ...Women's Day

*Continued from page 9*

where petty individual housekeeping will be replaced by socialized domestic services will women be free from the bondage of kitchen, bedroom and nursery.

Women workers along with their class brothers must organize internationally on the basis of a revolutionary program to fight for socialism.

The following are some of the points especially related to the position of women that revolutionaries fight for:

END DOMESTIC ENSLAVEMENT

- \* Socialize housework by providing free, quality dining rooms and laundry services under workers' control.

- \* Free medical services

available to all, including abortion, birth control, maternity care, etc.

- \* A national program of free 24-hour child-care centers available to all under workers and parents control.

- \* No divorce laws. Divorce should be obtained freely at the request of either partner. Child support should be paid by the state. Abolish the legal classification of illegitimacy.

FULLY INTEGRATE WOMEN INTO THE WORK FORCE.

- \* No discrimination based on sex, race, age or marital status. Equal pay for equal work.

- \* Free education for all including colleges and trade schools.

- \* Maternity leaves at full

pay. Equal benefits for part-time and temporary workers.

- \* Protective laws should cover not only women but be extended to men as well

- \* For a sliding scale of wages and hours--no loss in pay. Workers should divide the available work among those able to work. Fight unemployment.

- \* For unlimited cost-of-living escalator clauses in all union contracts. Unions must organize non-union workers and the unemployed.

- \* Worker control of hiring and firing.

- \* Nationalize all industry. Expropriation without compensation under workers control.

- \* For a workers' republic

## ...Origins

*Continued from page 11*

been a mistake not to form a faction immediately and formed one then. About a week after the formation of

the faction, a heated discussion broke out at a meeting of the Chicago branch of the CSL concerning the

discussion of differences with contacts. The Central Committee upon hearing of the discussion through the



Thus, as a revolutionary international the Fourth International was still-born. There has been no revolutionary international since 1921. Such an international remains to be built and is the primary task of the proletariat.

The Revolutionary Workers Group calls on all workers to join in the struggle against capitalism. It is only through the revolutionary struggle against capitalism that any gains in the living standard of the working class can be made. The only way that the living conditions of the

working class can be protected and bettered is by seizing social power and organizing society in the interests of the toiling masses. This can be done only through revolution on a world scale. Trade unions are not enough for this. Workers' councils are not enough for this. National parties are not enough. We need to build the International Party of Revolutionary Workers (Fifth International). This party must be based on the revolutionary teachings and work of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg and countless others. Never before in the his-

tory of capitalism has the question been posed so clearly as it is today: Socialism or Barbarism?

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST CAPITAL IS A WORLDWIDE STRUGGLE. NO COUNTRY IS FREE FROM THE SCOURGE OF CAPITALISM. WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE! THE STRUGGLE IS YET TO BE WON!

BUILD THE INTERNATIONAL PARTY OF REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS (FIFTH INTERNATIONAL)!

FORWARD TO THE WORLD SOCIALIST REVOLUTION AND THE WORLD WORKERS' REPUBLIC!

## Wounded Knee 1973

The events in Wounded Knee, South Dakota, following closely on the heels of the "Trail of Broken Treaties" occupation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington, D.C. have led to a renewed interest in the Indian question and the treatment which Indians have and still receive at the hands of the United States Government. Tremendous sympathy has developed for the plight of the Indians.

Main organizers of the occupation of Wounded Knee are the Oglala Sioux Civil Rights Organization (OSCRO) and the American Indian Movement (AIM). According to the March 16 *Militant* the Indians' demands are as follows:

OSCRO is demanding the immediate suspension of the tribal chairman,

tribal council, and the tribal constitution.

Further, it is demanding replacement of the BIA officials, termination of the tribal police, and a temporary federal trusteeship until a popular constitutional convention adopts a new tribal government system for the reservation.

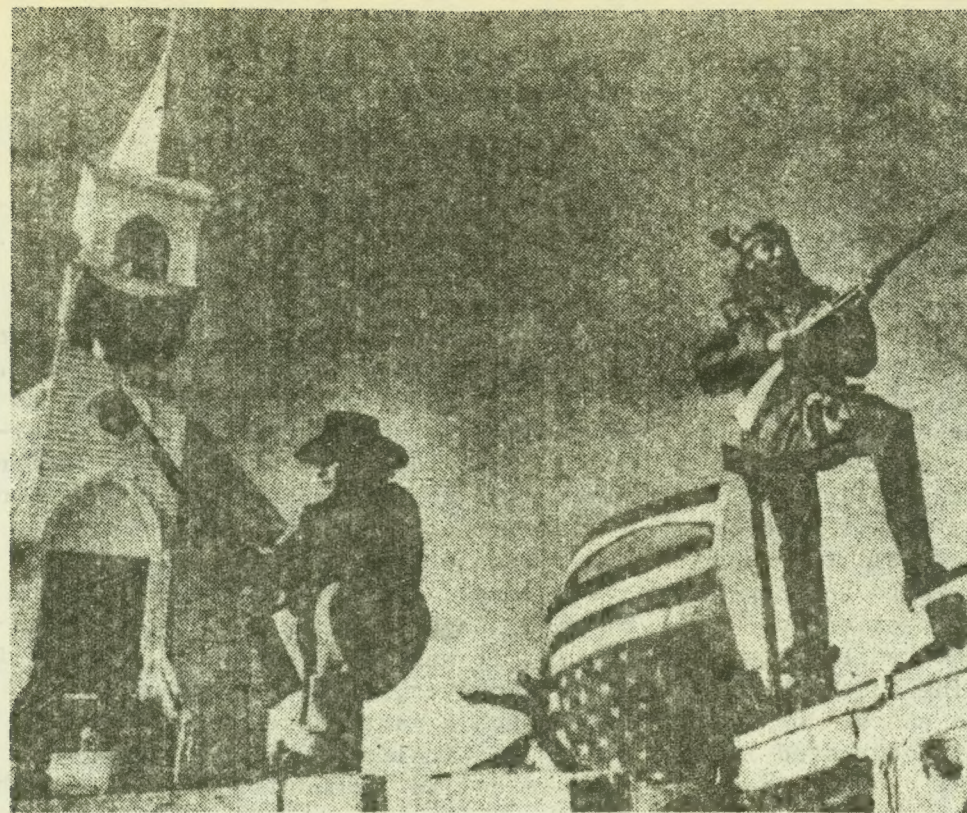
AIM is demanding that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee investigate all broken treaties and specifically the 1868 treaty with the Sioux, which has never been kept.

We can rest assured that even if the government agrees to some or all of the above demands, they will not keep their word. The Indians of all people should realize the futility of bargaining with the agents of the American capitalist class.

However, the nature of the demands brings another question into focus. These demands are basically for the United States to allow real tribalism on the reservations as opposed to the puppet-on-a-Washington-string tribalism which currently exists. This brings up the whole question of the nature of the Indian question and the Indian Wars of the 19th century. This is particularly brought to the fore since Wounded Knee is the site of an 1890 massacre of Indians by the US Cavalry.

While capitalism today is a moribund social system which is rotten ripe for a socialist revolution, it was not always this way. It did play a progressive role. One of the tasks of the bourgeois revolution (a progressive revolution in its time) was to bring the entire





North American continent under capitalist domination. Only in this way could the forces of production be developed to bring about the eventuality of socialism. The more primitive way of life of the Indians represented an obstacle to this development. Thus, the *defeat* of the Indian was progressive. What was reactionary was the genocide of the Indians and the failure to integrate them into society. Most Indians live either on reservations or in slums like Chicago's Uptown area. What Indians need today is not a program for an invigorated tribalism, but a program for *socialist revolution*.

# Israel's Terror

On February 21 the Israeli Air Force shot down a Libyan commercial airliner with 113 passengers and crew aboard. 107 of the 113 have died. The plane had gotten off course and flown over Israeli occupied Sinai Peninsula. The plane was on its way back toward Egypt and was only 12 miles from the coast when the Israeli jets shot it down.

Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Dayan said that they were afraid that the plane might be on a kamikaze mission to some city in Israel. However, it is obvious that this is a lie to cover up the brutality of the bourgeois Israeli regime. The Israeli government wishes to intimidate the Arabs and this is as good a way as

any. It is interesting to note that although planes from Europe flying to Tel Aviv might very well have kamikaze bombers on board, Dayan does not order the shooting down of every plane that approaches Lod Airport.

The Libyan plane incident is just another in a long string of terrorist activities being carried out by the Israeli government against the Arab masses. However, the bourgeois Arab governments are no better. Muammar Kadafi the reactionary Libyan head of state has threatened to send his air force in search of Israeli commercial planes as a means of retaliation.

While the Israeli and Arab rulers carry out the reactionary rivalries and intrigues, it is the Arab

and Hebrew working masses who suffer under all of the regimes in the Middle East. Their problems will not be solved by siding with any of the Meirs, Dayans, Husseins, Sadats or Kadafis who proclaim themselves the saviours of either the Hebrews or the Arabs.

Incidents like the downing of the Libyan plane and the terror raids on innocent civilians by Israeli commandos will only be ended when the working class in Israel, Hebrew and Palestinian alike unite to overthrow the capitalist regime of the Zionists and build a Socialist Israel. Likewise their brothers and sisters in the Arab countries must do the same.

FOR A SOCIALIST ISRAEL!  
FOR THE UNITED SOCIALIST  
STATES OF THE MIDDLE EAST!



# Fight for Socialism!

The world we live in is a world where people are divided into classes according to their role in production. The two major classes in society are the capitalist class and the working class. The capitalists own the means of production (factories, machines, etc.) but produce nothing. The workers, on the other hand, receive only meager wages for the sale of their labor power to the capitalists. Almost all production in society is done by the workers. However, almost all the benefits from this production go to the capitalists. The basis for production in this society is profit. The capitalists are not interested in having the workers produce things that people can use or that people need. They are only interested in what makes them the biggest profit. Thus, while the capitalists get richer and richer, the workers are worse off than they were before.

In order to increase profits the capitalists resort to all sorts of techniques which most of us are familiar with: speed-up, wage cuts, unemployment, labor-saving machinery. While, for instance, labor-saving machinery would be progressive in a society run by the workers, it does nothing for them under capitalism. It is just another attack on the workers.

Another feature of capitalist society is war. Every day there is a war going on somewhere in the world. This is due to the necessity of the capitalists to wage war in order to get ahead of capitalists in other countries. The working class has no interests in supporting these wars. What the workers want is peace. However, there can be no peace until the capitalists have been removed from power and this society replaced with one run by the workers in the interests of the toiling masses.

To do this, it is not enough to elect people to Congress or as President. The government is nothing more than the executive committee of the ruling class. It is the owners of the big corporations who have the final say as to what goes on. It is necessary to organize our own workers' councils. These councils will be the class rule of the workers after the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. When capitalism goes Congress will go with it. All the democracy surrounding the Congress is just a sham to

keep us tied to this system. It is democracy for the rich, for the capitalists. Our democracy will be real democracy, proletarian democracy, the democracy of the many. We do not simply want a workers' government, we want a workers' republic.

In order to throw out the capitalists and build a workers' republic and socialism the working class needs a revolutionary party. Such a party must be based on *The Communist Manifesto*, the first two Congresses of the Communist (Third) International, and the revolutionary work of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky and Luxemburg. It must be a democratic-centralist party. However, it is not enough to build such a party here in the United States. Capitalism is a world system. Even so-called "Communist" Russia and China are capitalist (state capitalist). In order to wage a successful worldwide struggle against capitalism the workers must have an international party. It is toward the construction of the International Party of Revolutionary Workers (Fifth International) that the Revolutionary Workers Group and *Workers' Truth* are dedicated.

In 1917 the Russian workers seized power under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party and Lenin. However, the revolution was isolated and the Russian workers exhausted from the hard struggle in a backward country lost power when the Bolsheviks lost faith in the world proletariat in 1921. The four years of the revolutionary dictatorship still remain, however, as a beacon for workers throughout the world.

Under capitalism the workers are nothing more than menials. We deserve a better life. We deserve socialism. However, it will not be handed to us on a platter. We must fight for it. For if we do not fight for socialism we will be handed barbarism. Socialism or barbarism?  
*Fight for Socialism!*

